### PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

## FOURTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITY PLANNING

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 27-29, 1912



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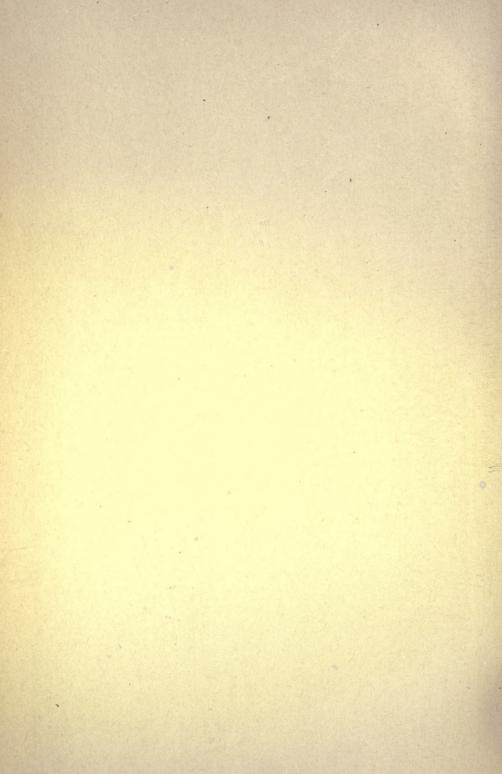
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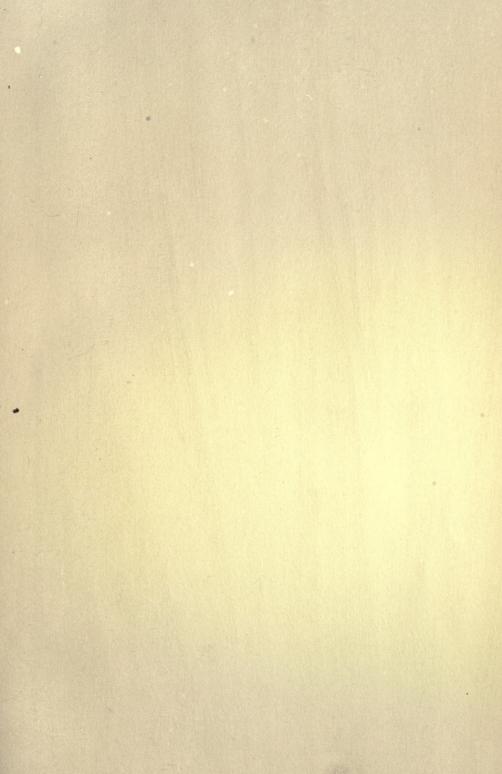
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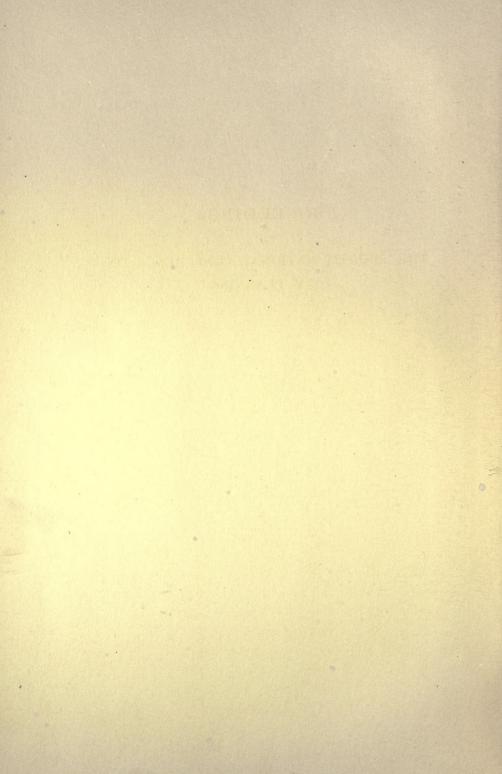
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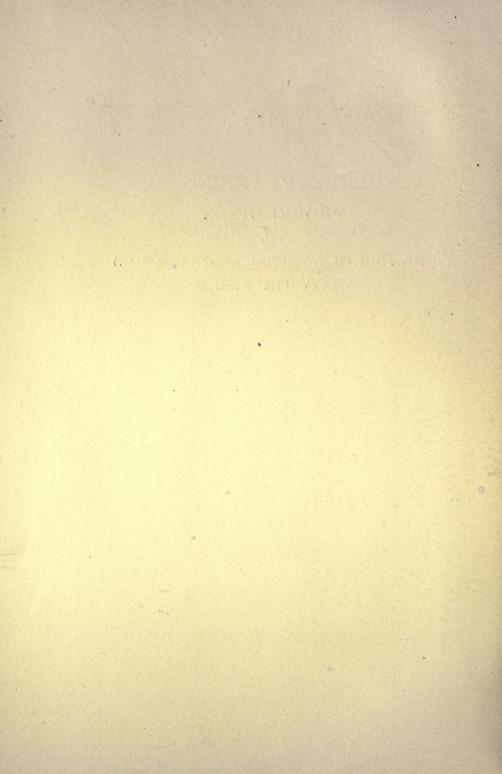




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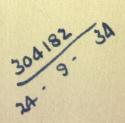
## CITY PLANNING

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**BOSTON: MCMXII** 





## EDITORIAL NOTE

THE precedent of former volumes has been followed in presenting the chief papers read at the Conference in full and condensing or summarizing the discussions.



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#### ADDRESS OF WELCOME

Hon. John F. FITZGERALD

Mayor of Boston

It is a happy custom that leads the chief national societies to move the seat of their conventions each year from one city to another. In this way the members become better acquainted with their own country, and even for men of large experience and wide travel, like yourselves, there is instruction to be derived from personally observing the evidences of growth and change that are constantly going on. This circulating habit is, I should suppose, particularly useful to the members of the City Planning Conference because every new city that you visit affords a local illustration of the problems that you are seeking to solve.

In Boston, for example, you will find a city relatively old and not consciously designed for the transaction of the enormous volume of business which now flows through it. As Mayor Collins said in his picturesque way: "Over a million and a half of people are trying to carry on their work on one square mile of territory." You will find the suburbs of the city under thirty separate governments, which are unable to get together with one another or with the capital itself. It is only when the state steps in, as was the case with the metropolitan water, park, and sewerage systems, that we are able to take something like concerted action. This is an unfortunate condition and a difficult one, rendered more difficult, I am sorry to say, by the obtuseness of the local authorities in many of the surrounding towns. There have been attempts to remedy

it, under the guidance of some of the best minds in Boston. We had a Metropolitan Improvements Commission a few years ago, and only a year or two since a Metropolitan Planning Commission was formed by action of the Legislature to report an outline which might form the basis of federated action between the separate units that go to make up what is called Greater Boston. Its members -Mr. E. A. Filene, Mr. J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., and Mr. John Nolen — are, as I need not say in this assemblage, men of the highest public spirit and great professional ability. Their report was progressive, yet moderate and guarded in its recommendations. It would have enabled us, for example, to build a system of highways connecting town and town - the so-called circumferential or concentric roads - equal to the radial lines, the spokes of the hub, as it were, which now connect Boston with the outlying centers of population.

Would you believe it, gentlemen, that report has been nullified, or at least set aside temporarily, not because of political opposition but through the hostility of the suburban places like Newton, which claim to have all of the intelligence and most of the virtue which abide in this neighborhood. Whether they feared that it might lead to closer political union with Boston or not, I cannot say, but I submit that their attitude shows very little enlightenment and suggest that the environs of Boston afford an excellent missionary field for the labors of your association. The plan outlined by the commission, of which these gentlemen were the members, was too broad and far-sighted for the grasp of men accustomed to deal only with problems that are purely local in their character and affect small populations. That is the difficulty which you will have to meet in endeavoring to bring about a more enlightened form of city planning. You must first get out the blackboard and give a few primary lessons, and in this way inculcate the metropolitan spirit as against the parochial attitude which now prevails.

Long ago President Eliot pointed out that as far as policing and fire protection were concerned the whole of Greater Boston was essentially a single city. Recently we have had another illustration showing how our hands and feet are tied with red tape when we attempt to move forward toward the dawn of a better day. Boston, as you are all aware, is very largely built of wood, and a wooden city is not only exposed to a high percentage of fire loss and under the necessity of maintaining an expensive fire department, but is, in the very nature of things, a more or less shabby city. Its houses need repainting, reshingling, repairing and constant repatching. apparent, I will not say the real, cheapness of wood presents a temptation to the speculator to erect threeapartment houses, built not to live in but to sell, and one of the curses of this city is the mushroom growth of this type of house, colloquially known in this vicinity as "threeflatters." We have had an ordinance in the city council for a year or more which aims to widen the zone of prescribed brick or fireproof construction, but the real estate men tell us that as long as the cities and towns just over the border permit wooden construction it will go on. The three-flatters will merely shift their position and gather beyond the city line. Now the danger is just as great under these circumstances because Boston and its suburbs are practically continuous. Only a few years ago a great fire in Chelsea — then a city of wooden dwellings leaped over the intervening creek and threatened the whole of East Boston. The remedy for this condition is united action by all the metropolitan cities, and yet when such action is suggested we find not zeal and harmony for the common cause but the old condition described by the Latin author: "As many minds as men."

In sounding this note of admonition I have no desire to discourage you or to express any discouragement on my own part. Looking at the situation broadly, we have had great success in recent years in simplifying the tortuous

plan of our ancient city. One by one we have inserted necessary links in our complicated street system. whole Park Square area, which you must have seen lying like a desert in the heart of our most flourishing section, is soon to be developed by a street system of its own, which represents the joint action of the city government and the owners of the land. New studies for the rearrangement of Copley Square will be exhibited in the art room of the Public Library, which is your headquarters. Avery Street will soon be widened and open up the shopping district, providing access from the Boylston Street station of the subway. Our new subways themselves, which are merely underground streets, are an interesting study and I hope you will find time to take the ride under Beacon Hill and over the new causeway in the West End. In such achievements as these we find inspiration and reason for hope that another half-decade will see our beloved city completely transformed. For the impetus to this movement I believe vou gentlemen deserve particular credit. You have in you something of the engineer and something of the philanthropist, the cool precision of the one and the ardor of the other, and I do not know any happier combination.

As Mayor of the city I am proud and honored to have such distinguished company sitting at this table as our official guests, and know that whether we frankly lay our difficulties before you or modestly point to what we regard as our successful achievements, in each case our words will fall upon sympathetic ears.

### REMARKS BY OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM SEVERAL CITIES

Following Mayor Fitzgerald's welcome there were brief remarks by official representatives from several cities. Mt. Vernon, N. Y., was represented by Mayor E. W. Fiske; Hartford by the City Engineer, Roscoe N. Clark; Detroit

by the Chairman of the City Planning Commission, Charles Moore; New Haven by its Consulting Engineer, Frederick L. Ford; Los Angeles by a member of the City Planning Commission, Dr. Dana W. Bartlett; Cleveland by the Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Munson Havens; Pittsburgh by a member of its City Planning Commission, E. K. Morse. City Planning Accomplishment was the special theme of Dr. Bartlett, Mr. Havens and Mr. Ford.

#### DR. DANA W. BARTLETT:

Ours is a growing city, and every city that is growing needs a definite plan. We have been working on this matter for several years, thanks to Charles Mulford Robinson. His report started us in this direction. We have had so many big things in hand that we have not been able to finance them all, but we have been gradually working out some great propositions.

You all know what it must mean to a city to bring water, as we are doing, two hundred and seventeen miles from the Sierras, with two hundred and twenty-seven thousand horsepower of electricity, besides securing a great harbor, where the municipality owns the docks and tide lands, and we are now preparing for a great municipal railway, and generally laying the foundations for a great industrial city on the Pacific Coast. We feel that we must work not for a commercial city, an industrial city, primarily, but for an out-of-doors city, typical of the life of the Southwest. We are in the making, and so it means something more to make plans for Los Angeles than for an Eastern city. Our present city is but a dot on the map beside the great city that is coming, and our slogan is, "Los Angeles in 1920, a city of a million people and without a slum." It is going to be possible to work that out. We are starting with a city that is naturally beautiful. Of course, we cannot live without commerce, but we want to make a delightful city to live in, and that is our one great thought in working it out.

Mr. Munson Havens:

It is an exceedingly great pleasure to be here today instead of a week ago today, because a week ago today I could not have told you what I can now tell you, that Cleveland on Tuesday voted the last bond issue to erect the last of the four pivotal buildings of our group plan. This assures the successful consummation in the very near future of that dream we have been dreaming, as the Mayor has said, for ten years. We are working along lines designed by Arnold Brunner of New York, to whose inspiration we owe so much. With this bond issue we shall complete the public library building, the fourth building of the group.

Several cities in Ohio besides Cleveland are doing work along city planning lines, and the interest of Toledo, Akron and Dayton is evidenced by their representation at this meeting.

I want to bring to the other cities here one message, because it is a message that comes home to our own hearts in Cleveland. One of the great dangers that cities must avoid in connection with this movement is that of thinking, dreaming, talking and not doing. And if you will permit me, and it will not be regarded as an intrusion, I wish to quote just a few lines from the foremost living English poet which seem to me to hit the nail precisely on the head.

Jubal sang of the wrath of God, And the curse of thistle and thorn— But Tubal got him a pointed rod, And scrabbled the earth for corn.

Jubal sang of the new-found sea, And the souls its waves divide— But Tubal hollowed a fallen tree And passed to the farther side.

Jubal sang of the golden years When wars and wounds shall cease— But Tubal fashioned the hand-flung spears And showed his neighbors peace.

Jubal sang of the cliffs that bar And the peaks that none may crown— But Tubal clambered by jut and scar And there he builded a town.

MR. F. L. FORD:

New Haven is interested in this important subject of city planning. Only a short time ago a most creditable report was published by the Civic Improvement Commission of that city, dealing with the future growth and development of that, the largest city in Connecticut, along intelligent, comprehensive and far-sighted lines. This report was based upon a thorough, detailed and exhaustive study by our honored president, Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, and Mr. Cass Gilbert, and represents a high ideal toward which the future New Haven can work.

At the present time New Haven is starting upon the expenditure of six million dollars for the construction of a magnificent railway terminal. You who are acquainted with and interested in New Haven know that a terminal station and re-arrangement of railway tracks and other facilities in that vicinity have been pressing needs. Knowing that the approaches to a city give the first impression to a visitor, and believing that that impression is usually the most lasting one that a person gets in connection with any of our American cities, we have been convinced that New Haven should lay out and develop a thoroughly dignified approach from the station to the heart of the city, and we are now at work upon such an approach. We are going to try to have that approach - which will be about 2500 feet long and which will go through a built-up section of the city—commodious, convenient and attractive, with suitably wide sidewalks and roadway, so that the great crowds which come to New Haven for the games and on other occasions may proceed from the station with the least amount of resistance and trouble. In order to be convenient, the approach must connect as directly as possible with the heart of the great city and must be so connected with the secondary streets that the crowds that attend the great athletic contests may be easily handled. We intend to make that approach serviceable by paving it well and keeping it clean, and in order to

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make it additionally attractive we shall probably attempt to control not only the height but the architecture of the buildings that will occupy conspicuous locations along it.

New Haven is intending to apply to the next Legislature of Connecticut for an act similar to the one creating a permanent city planning commission for the city of Hartford. That commission will have permanent and very broad authority, will be able to condemn outside of the lines of main approach, and it is proposed to have a provision so that such restrictions may be imposed as the commission wishes in connection with the sale of surplus land. A commission is desired that shall work along such lines over a great many years. This is the first practical step in city planning that New Haven has attempted since the excellent report to which I have referred was prepared and published. The railroad improvements and those to be carried out by the city will cost in the neighborhood of six million dollars. We believe, and I think you believe, that the best way to go about city building is to apply to any and every problem as it arises in our American cities the fundamental, underlying principles of city planning, guarding against the gross mistakes we have made in laying out the older sections and applying these new principles to the new sections. We do not hope to reconstruct all the older sections of the city, but it will be a great shame if we go on and repeat the blunders made for many years.

#### THE PROGRESS IN CITY PLANNING

#### MR. FREDERICK L. OLMSTED

Fellow American Society of Landscape Architects

I HAVE been asked by the Executive Committee to open this Conference by a general discussion of recent progress

in city planning.

I want to make clear, at the outset of my paper, that I shall not attempt a detailed and comprehensive catalogue even of the more notable recent steps in the progress of city planning. The slender and ill-defined organization of Executive Committee, Chairman and Secretary, by which the life of these Conferences is carried over from year to year, exists only for the purpose of arranging these annual markets for the exchange of ideas, and has been quite without any means for systematically collecting or disseminating information during the intervals between them. facts, therefore, upon which my discussion rests are, frankly, very fragmentary, in view of the vastness of the field. are not here to serve up and assimilate the predigested material resulting from a year of work by a limited staff of special investigators or experts: we are here on the common footing of perplexed but earnest students of an intricate group of problems, for the exchange of information and ideas. My duty is merely to put the ball in play.

Of the many kinds of activities that may properly be considered under the head of city planning, by far the most important group, because of the number of cities concerned, the volume of work done as measured by expenditure for salaries and so forth, and the immediate practical effect of the work upon the physical aspect of the cities,

is that of the regular and often long-established bureaus or departments in which are made the plans that actually determine, for better or for worse, what form shall be taken by the various sorts of development coming under the control of the executive departments of the cities. Even though the action of the several parts of a given municipal government may seem disconnected, short-sighted and uncoöperative in making the decisions which in the aggregate fix the city's plan, the decisions are not made by the toss of a coin, they are really the result of planning after some fashion; and it is only a question of degree how far the planning looks ahead, how far its several parts are correlated, how skillful and intelligent it is, what it leaves to chance and the discretion of individuals in the future.

No sane person dreams of a city plan that shall fix everything in advance, even tentatively. For my own part I feel perfectly clear that in some respects the methods of street planning now frequently in vogue give too little latitude of choice to the individual investor who has his own ideas as to the most desirable size and shape of lots and of buildings for his purposes. What I suppose this Conference stands for is merely this: that it would pay to exercise a stronger and more far-sighted control over some of the features of a city's physical growth than is now usual, that the plans for different classes of features could profitably be coördinated to a greater degree than is now usual, and that we are all in great need of light both as to principles and as to details of practice which will help to make the planning that is done more effective.

It is a distinction of degree or of method or of scope or of point of view, not at all a distinction of kind, which separates the work of a City Plan Commission from the work done by a park department in laying out parks, or by a school department in choosing sites for new schools, or by a street department in determining upon new streets and widenings, or by a traction company or a public service

commission in passing upon plans for improvements in a street railway system.

I say, therefore, that by far the greater bulk of all the city planning that is being done today, especially of that particularly important class of city planning which stands some reasonable chance of being carried into execution, is being done by regular and generally long-established planning agencies which form a part of the executive departments of the cities or are closely attached to those departments. Each planning agency is in general working on a fairly narrow part of the whole field and troubles itself very little about the aims of the other planning agencies; many of them are working in a short-sighted way, but each is pegging away at its own job and making or adopting plans that do get carried out. It would therefore be particularly interesting and illuminating if we could have a reliable and comprehensive critical review of the work of city planning that is done in this manner; if we could trace in it the evidence of progress and note the chief opportunities for further advance. Unfortunately I am far from having at my command the data for such a critical review. With perhaps a dozen cities I have had to do sufficiently to form some distinct personal impression of the local situation, even though based on fragmentary observations. Our Secretary, Mr. Shurtleff, in the course of some studies he has been making of the methods of acquiring land for municipal purposes, has visited other cities and has confided his observations to me. Concerning some few others I have formed an impression from reports of one or more departments; although, as you all know, the reports of municipal departments seldom afford very safe or complete evidence of just how their work is done. With the warning that you must take my general impressions thus formed for no more than they are worth, I will put them before you.

Adopting the customary divisions in the work, and leaving aside for the present all question of the correlation of

those divisions, the most fundamental is street planning. In nearly all municipalities there is at least a nominal official control over the development of the street plan. There is a bureau or official who is supposed to exercise technical skill and foresight in planning streets and whose approval of a plan is a regular preliminary to the acceptance or laying out of any street. In theory the authority of this street plan bureau, as I will call it, varies considerably, but in practice its influence varies enormously more. In a great many cases it is hardly too much to say that it acts merely as a draughtsman, surveyor and clerk for those who want to put land upon the market. "Subdivisions," planned independently of each other and by or for their respective owners, are submitted for approval, and are accepted without much question unless they transgress a few accepted and more or less arbitrary canons of the office, the most usual relating to a minimum width of street and to the avoidance of dead-end streets. Each plat submitted comes up as a brand-new problem. There is often a more or less conscientious effort to consider the plat upon its merits in relation to any general public requirements which the officials in charge for the time being happen to think of upon the spur of the moment, or may happen by chance to have had upon their minds before. But there is no general scheme of main thoroughfares planned in advance in the general interest of the city, with which to compare the local subdivision plats and on the basis of which to ask for modifications in them. This method is really a censorship upon private street plans, not a means of creative planning; but it is generally associated with an irregular succession of spasms of creative planning which design specific street improvements in the public interest, and endeavor to push them through to execution while the spasm is still active. The initiative for these creative spasms seems generally to come from outside of the official bureau, although the latter sometimes leads and is often sympathetic and cooperative when a project

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is actively pushed by a mayor or councilman or by active outsiders. In some places the creative spasms are frequent enough to give a semblance of continuity and comprehensiveness to the planning and to achieve some notable results, but in principle the machinery is like an explosion engine without a flywheel. It takes very frequent impulses to keep things moving, and there is apt to be enormous waste through repeatedly starting and stopping without accomplishing much work.

With the addition of certain other kinds of city planning effort, the above may be regarded as generally typical of the street planning of the Boston Metropolitan District, and I think it is typical of the great majority of cities throughout the country. A decided step in advance, so far as concerns the mechanism of street planning, is exhibited by those cities in which the official bureaus prepare complete street plans for large districts on their own initiative in advance of the proposals of land owners, and generally impose their plans, with or without modification, upon the land owners. Of course there is no sharp line dividing cities which do this from cities whose street-planning bureaus follow in the wake of private initiative. In Boston, for example, although it has been rather by fits and starts, a good many subdivisions have been platted entirely on the initiative of the public authorities and in advance of any proposals from the land owners. The difference between the first class of street plan bureaus and the second class is largely a matter of appropriations, for the best will in the world cannot keep the extension of a city's street plan much ahead of the actual growth without adequate funds for the work; but there is usually also a difference in point of view. A great many people are really averse to the idea of the city's taking a strong initiative in the matter. This aversion has some basis in certain objectionable results that are to be seen in much of the street planning that has been done by the more active, aggressive and forehanded bureaus. In the past the whole-

sale street planning of such bureaus has often been done in a rather perfunctory manner and with more regard to the point of view of land surveyors, and of mere brokers in real estate technically ignorant of the practical details of development, than to the point of view of broad-gauge engineers with a sense of responsibility for the total net results and costs in execution. It has tended to a mechanical uniformity of treatment. It has shown almost as much timidity as the work of the stand-pat bureaus in the provision of adequate main thoroughfares, which ought to be boldly designed as traffic routes for the benefit of the whole city with little regard to the details of land subdivision; and on the other hand it has failed to recognize that great and important economies are possible by differentiating from the thoroughfares those streets which are needed only for local purposes and treating them as such.

The cure for the evils of injudicious and perfunctory official street planning is in better planning, not in a return to laissez faire methods or to the method of a halting censorship of fragmentary plans made on private initiative. And it is an extremely healthy sign that the stronger and more aggressive street-planning bureaus are improving their methods, and adapting their means to the varied ends before them more skillfully and intelligently. I am inclined to think that progress is upon the whole more marked in this respect than in the advancement of old, timid, conservative bureaus into the aggressive class.

Another gratifying sign of progress is the tendency, upon the part of some at least of the strong and aggressive bureaus, to give a greater and more intelligent recognition to esthetic considerations in the development of street plans, both in the endeavor to avoid the needless destruction of agreeable natural features which might be put to use in the streets themselves or in parks or on the lots of suburban districts, and also by recognizing that the appearance of the street scenes and vistas of the future city is worth considering and is largely dependent upon the street plan

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and the location of summits and valleys thereon. I cannot say that this tendency to regard esthetic considerations on the part of the regular street-planning bureaus is wide-spread, nor has it brought out much latent artistic talent, nor has it gone so far in most cases as to seek eagerly for the coöperation of architects and landscape architects. But so far as it has gone it is a distinct sign of progress.

Parks come next to streets in the percentage of city area they occupy, and, like the streets, they need to be constantly extended and reduplicated to keep pace with growing population. For the most part parks are acquired as the result of particular spasms like those which often carry through specific thoroughfare improvements, each on its own merit without much regard to a general plan. Looking back over a long period, there is perhaps a little more tendency today, especially in the case of newly created park commissions, to regard the parks of a city as an organized system, and to consider with the aid of experts what will be required to make the system perform its function adequately for the whole of the city as the latter grows. But such comprehensive studies are the exception and are usually made on the initiative of a new commission not vet burdened with troubles of detail or else at the instance of some outside agency. The inducement to make such comprehensive plans for park development is even less than in the case of streets: because private capital seeking speculative return from land stands ready if it must to pay for most of the streets required in a proper street plan, whereas practically the whole cost of parks must usually be extracted from the reluctant general tax-payer by a constantly changing city council, or raised in some analogous way, and the supply of funds from such a source for anything but the absolutely unavoidable annual expenditures is so utterly undependable from one year to another as to discourage all idea of system and continuity in the plans for park acquirement and improvement, and to force a policy of hand to mouth opportunism.

It is this same disheartening difficulty, even more than any lack of understanding or of technical skill on the part of the street bureaus which makes their planning as weak as it is in the matter of main thoroughfares. They say, "What's the use? It will never be done."

What is true about parks and main thoroughfare improvements is true in perhaps greater degree about public buildings and the sites for them. The planning for these, in the sense of city planning, is almost perforce spasmodic. It is probably least so in the case of schoolhouses, which in our larger cities are so numerous, so rapidly increasing and so closely dependent on the distribution of population that the spasm of providing for them tends to become a continuous function and so to systematize themselves. The results are to be seen in the notable increase of practical and artistic efficiency in the school buildings of large cities of recent years, notably here in Boston for example.

I will not stop to discuss other city-planning activities going on continuously or spasmodically all the time in the regular bureaus, but in regard to the correlation of these activities I may cite the case of sewers and drains.

In view of the direct effect of the plan and grades of the streets upon the efficiency and economy of sewers and storm water drains and the great cost of supplementing the latter when they are planned inadequately in the first place, I have been astonished to find how generally the planning of sewers and drains lags even behind the planning of streets in American cities and how little the relations of the two are regarded in street planning.

In one city, which is distinctly among the leaders both in devising its tentative plan of streets well in advance of private developments and in its reasonable attitude of modifying and accommodating those tentative plans, in their non-essentials, to the wishes of land owners, and in which also the planning and construction of sewers and storm drains

has of recent years been handled in an unusually comprehensive and far-sighted way, the process of street and sewer planning is something like this:

The street-planning bureau makes topographical surveys and then prepares tentative street plans without fixing any grades. The grades are studied sufficiently to see that it is not impracticable to construct the streets without too excessive cuts, fills or gradients, but the proposed grades are not made a part of the plan and they may even not be recorded. When the streets come into existence, usually by dedication, the profiles are established by a different bureau, having no connection with the first except that their respective heads are both appointed by the mayor. Then the streets are turned over to still another bureau which has independent discretion as to the cross sections of the street and the method of construction and which disposes of the storm water in the easiest way it can under the limitations imposed by its predecessors, discharging the water into the most convenient natural water courses or into storm drains if they happen to exist in the district. The locations and grades of storm drains and sewers are determined by still another independent bureau, generally subsequent to the determination of the streets, but occasionally as to main drains in advance. I do not mean to imply that there is no coöperation between these several bureaus. They do consult more or less, or the situation would be intolerable; but they are in fact practically independent and there is no strong force other than personal good will to overcome the inevitable centrifugal tendency of departmental jealousies.

It is needless to add that streets laid out by a man who is not responsible for the profiles adopted, and running upon grades determined by a man who had nothing to say about the location, not only involve some serious and needless difficulties and expense in the final development of the sewerage and drainage system, but also fail to afford locations for the extension of the traction system as

good as might reasonably have been secured if that problem also had been taken into account.

The Park Commission in this same city is fortunate in having a dependable tax income not subject to erratic variation by the City Council, a condition not uncommon in the West, and has been pursuing an unusually systematic course during the last few years in regard to planned extensions of the park system, the plan having resulted from a spasm initiated by a citizens' association through employment of an outside expert to make a special report. But again, any relation between the plans for park extension and those for streets have been the result merely of personal good sense and good will on the part of the men working in or for the several bureaus and of the fact that some of them have put themselves out of their way to bring about a coöperation that is beyond the scope of their legal duties.

Since the normal attitude of the administrative official is that of not looking for any trouble which is not plainly part of his job, and equally of resenting the interference of any one else who butts into his affairs without being under official obligation to do so, it has long been apparent that the progress of comprehensive city planning demands the development of administrative machinery for facilitating and enforcing coöperation between the various planning bureaus as well as for stimulating some of them to more far-sighted and better planning and for supplementing the gaps where needful planning is not provided for by any bureau.

Consider for an instant some of the conditions which you saw today in the automobile trip: A splendid harbor with a commercial waterfront now at last largely under the control of a strong central authority, but absolutely dependent upon the voluntary coöperation of the railroads for its successful development. A park system which, in spite of being laid out and administered by more than a score of independent authorities, comes nearer being a single, adequately connected system than any other in the

country, but which is greatly impaired by the gaps in those parts of the system which belong to the borderland between parkways and highways, and which is utterly unsystematic in respect to the distribution of local recreation grounds. A number of first-rate radial thoroughfares, every one of them the result of a separate spasm, and elsewhere thoroughfares of even greater importance, like outer Washington Street, allowed to remain absurdly narrow because by mere chance no sufficiently strong spasm of improvement happened to come that way. Narrow picturesque local streets charmingly adapted to suburban single family houses, set back from the street; but permitted to be built up solidly with tenement houses without a setback for the protection of the street, without adequate open space for light and ventilation on the lot, and with almost utter disregard of fire risk through crowding of inflammable structures. The evils of the old slums needlessly being reduplicated throughout the suburbs, with rapid change and deterioration of neighborhoods through the practically unlimited freedom of choice of individuals in the use of their property regardless of the interests of their neighbors. I will not extend the catalogue of evidences that we need here in the Boston District a central, continuously acting, coordinating force to make our city planning what it ought to be, and it is a discouraging thing to contemplate the defeat of the Metropolitan Plan Commission bill in the present legislature.

But elsewhere there are better signs of progress.

It is notable that within the last year or two a considerable number of cities have established city plan commissions, either expressly permanent or created for an indeterminate period. The conception of the duties of such a commission and of its organization and methods of work, as held by those who have created them and by the commissions themselves, appears to be vague and various, and they are not clearly distinguishable as yet from the numerous temporary commissions which have preceded them.

The function of the temporary City Plan Commission has normally been to bring about the preparation and publication of a report with plans embodying a considerable range of suggestions for the physical improvement of the city: dealing always with improvements in the street system both in respect to extension and alteration; generally with improvements and extensions in the park system, and in the public buildings, by grouping and otherwise; not infrequently with improvements in the systems of street and other railways, of waterways and wharves, and miscellaneous public facilities; and to some extent with questions of housing and the regulation of private building generally. Each of these reports has been of value in two ways: first and mainly, as an educational effort for the development of a more intelligent understanding among the general public and among city officials of the value and the need both of far-sighted planning in all lines of city work and of the intimate correlation of all such plans; second, as direct contributions to the aggregation, more or less thoroughly digested and correlated, of plans and projects for physical changes in the city which are actually recognized as probabilities or possibilities, the thought of which does actually influence decisions, and which taken all together form the real city plan such as it is. The interesting and instructive essays in city planning produced by these spasms of city planning, have varied from a brief and sketchy brochure dashed off by some sympathetic and welltrained observer after spending a day or two in perambulating some small town, to such an elaborate and ambitious work as those produced for the Commercial Club of Chicago in 1909 and for the Municipal Plans Commission of Seattle in 1911.

Without in the least questioning the value — the actual necessity — of spasms of city planning such as are represented by these temporary commissions and these reports, in several of which I have had a part, without belittling the painstaking, thorough and constructive work which is

often shown in the plans and reports, I feel that it marks a great step in advance that a number of cities, and the State of Pennsylvania and New Jersey by general law, have recognized the city-planning function to be a continuous permanent function and not a thing to be done in a spasm once for all, or even once for a generation.

I feel this to be true, despite the regrettable fact that I have not heard of a single one of these permanent plan commissions that has yet begun to show notable results, to show any such vigorous signs of life as the excellent reports of many of the temporary commissions. To some extent they may feel staggered by the bigness of their job and hesitate where to begin, and for the most part they are left hanging without funds or with very inadequate funds. Moreover, some are still in the first throes of organization.

Those which have begun to settle into a regular stride, like the Hartford Commission, which is the oldest of the lot, seem to be regularly performing as yet not a great deal more than the functions of a street-planning bureau. many cases the main efforts of the Commission seem of necessity directed for the present to further educational work, to the building up of a sufficient public opinion to back the Commission in the inevitably costly work of city planning which shall be at once thorough and comprehensive and unremitting. We have had thorough and farsighted planning of fragments of the city. We have had some broad surveys of the field that have been of necessity rather superficial and spasmodic. The drift is decidedly toward the far more difficult task of combining these qualities in a continuous operation, and it is yet too early to speak of results except as they appear at close range to those in the midst of them.

### THE MEANING OF CITY PLANNING

### MR. ARNOLD W. BRUNNER

Fellow American Institute of Architects, New York City.

THE desire for a better, more orderly, more livable city is abroad in the land. There is much loose enthusiasm, some curiosity, and a general desire to "do something." Accordingly committees are formed, meetings are organized, resolutions are passed, and very often the matter ends there. The most praiseworthy intentions are fruitless, without definite aim and purpose.

The movement for a city plan is generally started by a few public-spirited citizens, a club or society, or a combination of societies. The local government seldom appoints a city planning commission until the impetus has come from private societies who have taken the initiative and aroused interest in the subject.

At the very beginning the principles of city planning should be explained by a competent authority, as the air is full of misgivings, and in order to proceed intelligently there are numerous misapprehensions that must be corrected.

The public officials and all those exercising authority over the city's expenditure have assumed serious responsibilities by reason of their office, and it is due to them to have the case presented in a sensible, serious, businesslike manner.

The first impression which we must overcome is that the city is to be turned over to a number of artists who intend in some vague manner to make the city beautiful.

We know that city planning does not mean mere civic

adornment or street decoration, and that it is a rational treatment of a city to promote the convenience and health of its citizens. Accordingly we should say so.

It is feared that a city plan will be ruinously expensive and plunge the city into debt. We know that the contrary is true and that it simply means the exercise of such prudence and foresight as are necessary to secure the success of any business enterprise. Accordingly we should say so.

It is generally feared that business will be interrupted and commerce ruined. We know that the adoption of a city plan is for the very purpose of encouraging commerce and facilitating the transaction of business. Accordingly we must say so.

It is generally supposed that a city plan must be put in operation immediately and all its provisions executed at once. We know that the plan is only a scheme for development, a program of events to be followed one after the other as the occasion permits. Accordingly let us say so.

It is feared that old landmarks will be destroyed and the city's expression and individuality will be entirely lost. We know that good city planning is especially careful to preserve local traditions, old buildings of historic value, and everything that accentuates the individuality of a city. Accordingly why not say so?

It is feared that we shall have a series of weak reproductions of London, Vienna, and Paris. We know that our cities should be American — American at its best. Accordingly let us say so.

These facts and many others must be stated in good, plain terms. The public officials entrusted with the care of a city, mindful of their responsibilities, must be convinced that city planning, the movement that so much interests us, is a sensible, serious proposition. Once assure them of the underlying principles of this great movement and we can secure their hearty support. The beauty that results from the adoption of a good city plan will be wel-

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comed by them as it will by all citizens, but the beauty that it is our motive to secure is, like the beauty of all architecture, founded upon a clear, sensible solution of practical problems.

City planning is not a fad today, it is a necessity; it is not an extravagance, it is an economy; it is not an artist's dream, it is a scientific reality.

Our success depends largely upon how we state our case. The "City Beautiful" failed — failed because it began at the wrong end. We must state the case in the same sequence that we observe when we make our designs — the plan first, the elevation follows.

Since utility and beauty go hand in hand, let us insist upon utility. Since we have in mind a combination of science and art, let us emphasize science.

There is no doubt that the unregulated growth of a city is most wasteful and that improvidence and lack of foresight are our pet forms of extravagance. An explanation of this appeals strongly to the public, who will also be interested to know how property values are increased by good planning, and, generally, that civic art is a real asset, not an imaginary one. We are all familiar with these arguments, and we know that their soundness has been demonstrated again and again, but to the general public this is a new subject, and we must take nothing for granted.

When we quote European examples, let us present both aspects of the case. Take the Place de la Concorde, for instance; it is our duty to explain that it is wonderfully planned, that the provisions for traffic are perfect, and that it is logically designed for its purpose, and then our raptures about its beauty will meet with hearty approval.

When we point out the beauty of that splendid boulevard on the banks of the Danube in Budapest, one of the most attractive in Europe, let us not forget to mention the admirable provision made for shipping and its attendant necessities, which makes this work an almost ideal combination of the useful and the beautiful.

Of course we must design beautiful cities, and we must dream great dreams of the future, otherwise there is no reason or excuse for our profession. A constructive imagination, a fine sense of form, color, and composition are absolutely necessary, besides a knowledge of the complicated practical problems that present themselves. cordingly I believe that the preparation of a city plan should be the work of several men or of a commission. While we do not design new cities today, it is more difficult to rearrange and develop existing ones, and the skill of the architect, the landscapist, the traffic expert, various kinds of engineers, and others who are specializing on civic problems, are all necessary. These experts, working together, having the advantage of consultations and debates, can produce a design combining the best of science and art, which no single individual could hope to equal.

I have found, to my surprise, that many cities are entirely neglectful of their historic possessions and that interesting landmarks are ruthlessly destroyed. A professional adviser, who is not a resident, can do much to preserve the individuality of a city, and his advice often checks the destruction of fine old colonial buildings, for instance, and other priceless possessions that could not be replaced.

Lectures, illustrated by lantern slides, are of course the most effective method of bringing the principles and scope of city improvements to the attention of the public, and they are especially useful before any designs are presented or changes proposed. A real campaign of education is necessary, and it cannot be begun too soon nor can it be too vigorously prosecuted.

The first visible sign of a genuine demand for the rearrangement and improvement of a city is a report. It is generally illustrated, and this is most advisable. Only a few people read reports, everybody looks at the pictures. While much care is bestowed on the illustrations, there is some divergence of opinion as to what kind will best fulfill their purpose.

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It must be remembered that the object of the report is not only to record the opinions of the experts, or the commission, but also to arouse public interest; accordingly every suggestion of importance should be presented so that it can be easily understood.

We may indulge in plans, elevations, and sections, rendered in our best style, but it is well to supplement them by sketches that will appeal to the layman.

Photographs of existing conditions placed at the side of drawings of proposed changes are very convincing, and show the contrast of what is and what may be in the simplest way.

Maps and plans are inevitable, but if we take the trouble they too can be drawn so as to clearly interpret their meaning. An excellent method of presenting a new plan, or portion of a plan, is to have it printed on strong, thin tissue paper and place it over the old plan, so that a comparison between the two may be easily made and the difference noted at a glance.

The effect of this method may be seen by referring to that delightful book "Paris à travers les Ages," in which the transformation of the various quarters of Paris are shown in this manner.

It has been a common practice to include reproductions of civic centers, and similar work projected by other cities, all of which is most encouraging, together with photographs of European cities showing their success in city planning.

While the Place Vendôme and the Avenue des Champs Elysées have been slightly overworked of late years, the masterpieces of the Old World are always an inspiration to us. It is, however, only fair to point out that the conditions under which these great works were produced do not obtain in the United States. We can and must study the works of the great masters, always realizing that their methods are not our methods and cannot be so under our form of government.

A broad far-reaching plan for the city, providing for its future growth in all its activities, is desirable, and in fact necessary, but as there are nearly always conditions that require immediate relief and which must be treated first without undue loss of time, it is often well to prepare a study or preliminary report which, bearing in mind the ultimate, larger design, will specialize on problems of pressing importance.

Good designs demand adequate presentation, and our drawings should be interesting and convincing, but at the risk of being disagreeable I must say that many of the drawings that we now make to accompany city reports

have far overshot the mark.

What would we say of the architect who made drawings for a building, or group of buildings, however beautiful, but which could not be built? We deal, not in drawings, not in pictures, but in results. The drawings are the tools of our trade. We would say very harsh things indeed of the man who made designs that could not be realized, who planned buildings that he knew could not be erected; but the scope of city planning has grown so great, its opportunities are now so large, that we have been led astray by the immensity of the subject, and with our new vast horizon we have made huge pictures, wonderful pieces of scene painting, in which facts have been ignored, grades forgotten, whole railroad systems eliminated, and the city's activities ignored. I have seen a larger part of a prosperous commercial district wiped out and replaced by a series of Italian gardens - on paper - impossible civic centers, boulevards leading nowhere, and similar absurdities. Designs have been made, submitted, and published, that not only could not be executed but which should not be executed.

To me this is most reprehensible. The city, as our client, deserves the same fair treatment as an individual. We may deceive ourselves, but the deception is certainly discovered sooner or later, and the whole cause of city planning set back for years.

City planning is not for amateurs, it requires the trained, experienced practitioner, and if we are perfectly honest with our work we shall receive the support and enthusiasm of the public.

The scope of city planning is much wider than is generally supposed. The Town Planning Conference, held in London in 1910, which was so successful, covered an enormous field, and papers were read and serious discussions followed on nearly every branch of the question.

The planning of Hellenistic Cities, Rome, the Roman world, the Cities of the Renaissance, French and English Gothic towns in the South of France, were described.

Papers were read detailing the progress made in Germany, France, England, Italy, and Sweden, and special articles were devoted to what is being done in London, Paris, Glasgow, Brussels, Khartoum, and the Federal Capital of Australia.

The Development of Cities, Considerations of the Housing Question, Extension of Suburbs and Garden Cities, formed an important part of the Conference.

The City of the Future was considered from the American, English, and French point of view. No less an authority than Monsieur Hénard contributed an essay on "Les Villes de l'Avenir."

The Preservation of Ancient Features, the Transition Period of Urban Development, and the Evolution of Cities, Parks, and Public Gardens, Open Spaces and Running Waters, Recreation Grounds, Congested Areas, the Restraint of Advertising, are among the titles of addresses.

The Growth of Control over Town Development, Land Tenure, the Town Planning Act, and other legislation were discussed, and there were many others, general in their character, on City Improvements, The Architect and Civic Ornamentation, Cause and Effect of the Modern City, etc.

This incomplete summary of the work of the Convention

conveys a faint idea of the immense field covered by the words "city planning."

It is difficult to imagine an individual to whom some of these subjects do not intimately appeal, and he must be a dull citizen indeed who is not vitally concerned in the development, beauty, and honor of his city.

# THE ATTITUDE OF THE ENGINEER TOWARD CITY PLANNING

### Mr. George F. Swain

Professor of Civil Engineering, Harvard University; Member of the Boston Transit Commission

I HAVE been asked to say a few words to you regarding the attitude of the engineer toward city planning. I will occupy but little of your time to say what occurs to me upon this topic.

City planning seems to me to be a field in which, more than in most fields of human activity, the different professions should meet and cooperate, because of the multiplicity of objects to be attained, and the varying aspects of the general problem. Dealing, as its name implies, with the general problem of the laving out and planning of cities in such manner as to best conduce to the comfort. happiness and well-being of the population, its aspects are manifold. It deals with questions of construction. questions of health, questions of beauty, questions of social and moral welfare. It treats of the causes and prevention of congestion of population, and in its broadest sense, as Mr. Olmsted well said at the opening of the last conference, of congestion of all kinds - of people in buildings, of buildings or land, of transportation facilities, of recreation facilities, of means of supplying light, air, water or anything else. It deals, indeed, with all problems involved in making our cities - in their physical arrangement and equipment - healthier, pleasanter and more desirable to live in, to come to and to move about in. It involves legal problems of no small difficulty, especially in this country, with our diverse national, state and municipal

authority, relating to methods of taxation, of condemning land for public improvements, the framing of building laws and the regulation of public utilities. Upon this common ground, then, the engineer, the architect, the landscape architect, the sanitarian, the lawyer and the sociologist meet to aid each other in solving the questions which have reached their present great importance mainly because of the most remarkable sociological phenomena of the past century, namely, the increasing tendency of our population to crowd together in cities. It is probably not generally realized that while in 1790 only 3.3 per cent of the population of this country lived in cities of 8000 population or over, today the percentage is over 33. No wonder, then, that within recent years the problem of the city plan has more and more forced itself upon the public attention, until it has culminated in this active and energetic association. whose deliberations have done so much to render definite the problems with which we are face to face.

Of the various problems involved, those of an engineering character are by no means the least important, and may well be the most important, as well as the most difficult of solution. They include the great problem of urban transportation, by lines on the surface, overhead and underground, the relation of terminals of steam roads and of wharves and docks to the city plan, with questions of the proper width and arrangement of streets, the proper form of pavement, and the proper disposition of water, gas and sewer pipes, as well as of electric conduits for power, light and other purposes.

And yet, notwithstanding the prominence of engineering problems among those which you have to solve, the engineer has not as yet become sufficiently identified with this movement or with this organization. Whether this is due to any lack of initiative on his part, or to a lack of appreciation of the importance of the engineering point of view on the part of those who have so efficiently promoted the movement, I will not attempt to say. That it may be in

some measure due to the latter, however, would seem to be indicated by the fact that the organizing committee formed at the first meeting, in 1909, was specified to consist of representatives of the Committee on Congestion of Population in New York, the American Institute of Architects, the League of American Municipalities, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Civic Association, the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, with no official recognition of such organizations as the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Public Health Association, or, indeed, of any engineering organization whatever. The problem seems to have been considered, in its inception, primarily as an architectural and sociological one. I venture to predict, however, that as its problems become more and more concretely defined, it will be found to be fundamentally more and more an engineering problem.

However, all things must have a beginning, and I, for one, am disposed to award all praise to those who originated the movement, to whatever profession they may belong, and I am sure that engineers will not be lacking in enthusiastic cooperation in the future. Indeed, as I have perused the volumes containing the records of the previous meetings, I have noted with satisfaction the presence of papers by engineers of eminence and of experience in the particular civic problems with which we are most intimately concerned. I wish to emphasize the fact, however - though it is probably so well recognized that it does not even need mention - that no civic plans of any magnitude will at the present time be adequate without the cooperation of a transportation engineer of experience in the working out of the traction problems. That this is the case is evidenced by the recent elaborate study for the city of Seattle, a work carried out under the supervision of an eminent transportation engineer, under the direction of the equally eminent city engineer, and also by the recent studies for Pittsburgh, Hartford and other cities.

It is perhaps worthy of note that the urgency of the transportation problem in cities has been precipitated by three inventions or developments in applied science, for which the engineer is responsible, namely, the steel frame building, the elevator and the telephone. Without the first two, the modern high building — almost a small city in itself — would be impossible, and the consequent street congestion would not be so acute. The influence of the telephone is not so well recognized. Some years ago, an official of the American Telephone Company told me that his engineers had made a study of the relation of the telephone to one of the New York sky-scrapers, which resulted in the surprising conclusion that if all the telephone messages sent from and delivered to this building had to be carried by messenger, the entire building would be required for the elevators. The telephone, then, has made practicable the high building.

Of the various engineering problems involved in city planning, the most important is unquestionably that of transportation. Here, again, the solution is made possible by the development of the electric car, without which modern urban transportation, whether on the surface or above or below, would be impracticable. In the study of this problem, the point which strikes me most forcibly is the fact that, as in everything else, the only thing that is permanent is change. Our cities cannot be planned as a new problem, to be solved once and for all. They are always in the making. The character of a district, and its transportation needs, very radically change in a comparatively few years. Means now sufficient may in a few years become inadequate or, possibly, more than adequate. It is always a condition and not a theory that confronts us, and foresight, founded on experience, must be exercised in a remarkable degree. Only fifteen years ago the first subway in this country — that known as the Tremont Street Subway in this city — was opened for traffic. Since that time three new subways have been opened in Boston; three new

ones or extensions of old ones are under construction; and the original one will have to be materially modified in some of its parts. With the rapid substitution of high buildings for the old low ones, it seems scarcely possible to keep pace with the demands for more rapid transit. Each new line is congested almost as soon as it is put into use, and engineering ability of a high order, combined with long experience, is requisite in order to plan intelligently and adequately for the future. As a result, the scene of congestion is becoming in many cases shifted from our lines of track to our street surfaces, which are proving inadequate for the foot passengers and teams which must use them. Some restriction of the height of buildings, or some regulations similar to the foreign zone system, by which certain sections of the city are set aside for certain uses, seem to be increasingly necessary; and, in addition to subways and elevated structures for carrying trains of cars, similar structures will soon become necessary for the ordinary team and foot traffic, or else street widenings, always difficult and very costly to carry out, will be imperative.

Those of you who are familiar with Boston, which was planned, it is said, not by engineers or landscape architects, but by the cows, will no doubt be painfully impressed with the woful inadequacy of many of our streets. On a busy day you will find it sometimes difficult to distinguish the sidewalk from the roadway, for there are almost as many foot passengers on one as on the other. You may, therefore, be interested in the most recent development in the subway plans for Boston, which, though a small thing in itself, is perhaps unique.

### DISCUSSION

The Work of a Planning Commission

THE CHAIRMAN, MR. OLMSTED:

The subjects are now open for discussion. I think that experiences, suggestions and questions in regard to the work

of city planning commissions will be most profitably discussed.

If no one else has experiences to offer at this time I shall have to give some of my own. I had the tables turned on me rather recently by being appointed on a committee by the town of Brookline, not quite a city planning commission but an ordinary board of municipal improvements. It is a permanent committee, serving like most town committees without pay, the duty of which is to consider, pass upon and advise the selectmen concerning municipal improvements which are proposed from time to time. The committee, not being burdened with the routine administrative duties which the selectmen have pressing upon them all the time, is supposed to have the leisure to look ahead and take the large view, to hunt for trouble, which the selectmen, like the city councils in most cities, have not time to do.

We have not done very much beside reporting on specific improvements that were referred to us by the selectmen, but we have asked the town engineer to prepare a topographical map of the town in one sheet, showing all the streets, with contours and with figures of elevation on the streets, so that we can study the town as a whole. The town engineer has had most of this topographical data, but not assembled in convenient form for such general studies.

The situation of this committee of ours is, I think, perhaps the situation of many of the permanent city planning commissions recently appointed. We have no appropriation, and any engineering work, plan work or paid investigations, must come out of the general appropriation of the town engineer. The town engineer is very much interested and his assistants are working on the thing, but they have a great many troubles of their own already. The advancing of this sort of work at all rapidly is largely a question of getting separate appropriations, because the demands made on general appropriations by pressing and

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immediate municipal problems will otherwise drive this remoter planning to the wall. I hope that members of city planning commissions, city engineers and others who are trying to get results, will give something more definite as to their difficulties and the devices or steps which they find it profitable to take. That is what we all want to know—what are you doing, and what do you need in order to do more?

# MR. C. W. KILLAM, Cambridge, Mass.:

I would like to ask what a town of the size of Cambridge, 100,000 inhabitants, can do in reference to public improvements coming into the town, improvements of all kinds bridges, subways, stations, everything from a lamp post up; how it can get those things done right, what sort of a body in a city of that kind ought to control? I have had during the last year some experience with the Building Commission in that town, which is supposed to advise the city government on any building proposition that comes up. But building propositions are only a part of the things in which a city is interested. When a subway comes in, as one has lately come into the Cambridge, there is nobody to report to the city of Cambridge as to whether the thing is well arranged, to see that the stations are properly placed and designed, so that they fit the surroundings. There is nobody but the City Engineer, who is very busy doing something else, who is paid perhaps only \$2000 a year, and probably knows nothing about architecture and other things entering into the various questions that may arise. Such things are therefore left with a powerful corporation which fortunately in this case has good advice. But in general a city such as Cambridge is utterly at a disadvantage in coping with such questions. Why should not a city of 100,000 people be as well represented by experts as the Boston Elevated? Some of you here may know that the Boston Elevated Road, entirely of its own volition, spends thousands of dollars a year for expert

help to make things good looking and well arranged. Cities have not reached that high standard yet. Now, can any of you people here tell me what sort of a body we should have, whether an unpaid force or a paid expert who can see that the city gets a square deal in all those things which go to make or mar a city?

### CHAIRMAN OLMSTED:

I think perhaps Mr. Brunner can answer your question. Perhaps he can speak from his experience while a member of the Art Commission of the city of New York, which probably has larger powers and more work to do than any similar body, of the sort you have spoken of, in the country.

### MR. ARNOLD W. BRUNNER:

I am not sure whether what I can say will answer the gentleman's question. The Art Commission of the City of New York is an unpaid body of ten members, composed of seven laymen, one painter, one sculptor, and one architect. According to the city's charter no work of art shall become the property of the city unless it has been submitted to and approved by the Art Commission, and the Charter further defines the term "work of art" so that it includes not only paintings, mural decorations, sculpture, and monuments, but buildings, bridges, and even lamp-posts and fences.

The value of the works passed upon by the New York Art Commission has in some years gone as high as \$50,000,000 or \$60,000,000, so you see that its responsibilities are very serious.

Much of its most important work is not realized by the general public, as the rejection of faulty designs is simply published in the City Record with the statement that Submission No. —— is rejected. The details of the rejection are not emphasized out of consideration for the feelings of the donors or designers. In many cases suggestions are made so that faulty designs may be improved and resubmitted and accepted.

The work of the Art Commission has proved that absolute control may be exercised over municipal art without producing irritation and without impairing the activity of the various departments of the city government, and the steady improvement that has resulted from its labors is most encouraging.

I suppose the real answer to the question that has been raised here is that if the city really wishes an Art Commission it can have one. When its functions are well known and its good results have been proved, the majority of citizens will demand some commission of this kind, and when the majority of the citizens demand it they can undoubtedly have it.

# Mr. J. R. Morse, Tacoma, Washington:

We have in the city of Tacoma, a city of 90,000 people, a municipal advisory board. It was authorized by the City Council on the first of February this year. It is composed of twenty-one of the principal citizens of the city, taking in the three best civil engineers of the city, the three best architects and practically the three best of the various professional men about the city. They are divided up so that each man appears once upon a committee. There are committees on city planning and beautification, transportation, harbor development, extensions and highways, public utilities, legislation, city engineering, and so on. These committees and subcommittees meet and decide on everything upon which the City Council desires advice, and in that way the City Council has intelligent advice on various city problems as they come up.

The Board has not the absolute veto power of the New York Art Commission, but its influence is great because of the character of men that serve on its committees. The Committee on Docks, for instance, has as one of its members the First Vice-President of the Milwaukee Railroad who gives an afternoon of each week to the Committee work.

# A Housing Code

MRS. ROLLIN NORRIS, Ardmore, Pa.:

I should like to ask the members of the Conference the best method of securing a desirable building code. We have been interested sufficiently to write to the governor to appoint a commission to study the provisions of such a code, but now we are beginning to wonder just what recommendations to make to the commission if it is appointed. The time has come. I believe, when as Americans we should stand for more stringent sanitary regulations and further restrictions as to the number of houses that should be put on a piece of land. I think a national organization like the City Planning Conference or an association interested in housing could help us a great deal in Pennsylvania. I would request that the City Planning Conference take up as a part of its duty the consideration of a building code which should contain, among other things, provisions governing the height of buildings and the percentage of lot which a building should occupy.

# CHAIRMAN OLMSTED:

The subject of which Mrs. Norris has spoken is, as we all recognize, of tremendous importance and difficulty, and we are all looking for that model building code which will cover all these subjects. The regular process in framing a code is to take the New York Tenement House Law and use its provisions to patch up the local building code. It is a process which gives lamentable results. It seems to me that nobody has made an attempt to find out what is the logical and reasonable thing to do as a norm from which different localities may proceed. I am sure we would like to hear from Mr. Veiller on the whole building code proposition.

MR. LAWRENCE VEILLER, New York City:

I am very sorry that I cannot comply with the Chairman's request, for it would take at least twelve or twenty more hours to discuss the whole building code proposition.

I will touch upon the subject very briefly. Some of the questions involved in building codes may perhaps be illuminating, as showing the experience of New York, and that experience may be very helpful to other communities. We are now going through our fifth attempted revision of the very bad building code passed thirteen years ago. It is estimated that those five revisions may cost the city of New York \$350,000 for fees of the men who have revised the code, and we have n't had a code yet. None of them has ever been adopted. We have one pending before us now that has a distinguished parentage. It comes from a group of really disinterested citizens, architects of the highest reputation, engineers, men of a similar type, the building material interests and others being represented, and it is one of the poorest codes we have had presented in those five revisions.

I wonder whether city planners are really interested in a building code? I doubt very much whether we are. We are all interested, I take it, in housing codes, but I think the time has come when we should make a strong distinction between the two. I am willing to put it to a vote of this gathering whether any of us care much, unless we be engineers, about stresses, strains and factors of safety, details as to the kind of beams, concrete against terra cotta, sand, cement, things of that kind. Those are the things that a building code deals with, primarily. What we are interested in, I take it, is a housing code, a code which regulates the height of buildings, a code which regulates open spaces for light and ventilation, a code which has some relation to city planning and provides for ventilation in the interiors of our blocks, a scheme which divides the city into building lots with relation to the number

of streets that we must have for practical use, making such an arrangement that our lots will not be too small. It seems to me that those and a number of cognate questions are the questions that we are interested in and that it would not advance the city planning movement one iota were we really to get that model building code that our President has so much at heart.

I am amazed, as I go through the length and breadth of the United States from time to time, to find what the attitude of the people is when, for instance, it is proposed to take what is really a first step in city planning - namely, to provide for adequate backyards - you will see the entire citizenship rise en masse ready to slay the poor individual who suggests such a thing. I wish you would. when you go back to your own city, look into that question of backyards, and see what your laws are on the subject. You will find that you have practically no laws in most cities of the United States, except where they have a copy of the inadequate New York law of some years ago; and if you will propose to the authorities a law which would result in generous backyards, as a matter of compulsory regulation, you will see what happens to you. This building code now pending in New York, which was referred to a few moments ago in complimentary terms, has among its other meritorious provisions the first attempt that has been made in New York City, aside from the tenement house law, to provide for backyards, and it sets the standard as an irreducible minimum at the large figure of five feet for a building 200 feet high! That is the progress we have made in the great city of New York in our attempt to deal with the building code in the year of grace 1912.

# MR. A. N. PIERSON, Westfield, N. J.:

The English tenement house laws lay down very well defined specifications as to light shafts and areas between the rear line of lots and the rear line of buildings. I think

there is a provision that 30 per cent of the lot shall be left for air spaces in the rear of the building.

### CHAIRMAN OLMSTED:

That provision applies only to tenement houses. I think that Mr. Veiller, in speaking of a housing code, meant not merely to distinguish it from a building code dealing with structural details, but also from tenement house laws which cover only one class of buildings, the good provisions of which may be largely negatived by the unregulated building of other classes of structures immediately adjacent to the tenement houses.

# MR. W. F. BURDETT, St. John, N. B .:

From what I know and have read on the subject, I think it is practically impossible to establish a code of laws governing housing or building property. In England the law is that there must be a given area to a given number of inhabitants for every house. The result has been that building speculators have been able to build forty houses on an acre of ground and still comply with the building laws. I think the experience indicates that no code of laws will adequately govern that question, but I believe that the plan which has been incorporated in the English Town Planning Act is the best solution of the question of housing of the working classes. By that plan those working on a scheme for a town plan can regulate the size of houses and the number to the acre. The whole scheme is then submitted to the Local Government Board and becomes official on its approval. Thus the housing of the whole community is laid out in advance and the conditions of each locality are taken into consideration. By this means attractive cottages are provided for working men, grouped in such a way that there is ample space about each house

### PAYING THE BILLS FOR CITY PLANNING

# MR. NELSON P. LEWIS

Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, New York City

In discussing city planning there is frequently a disposition to ignore such practical questions as that which is the subject of this paper. The writer recalls one occasion at a public dinner when a gentleman of distinguished reputation in the world of art expressed his sense of humiliation that one of the speakers, who was the chief financial officer of the city, should have introduced such sordid considerations as those of cost when the discussion up to that time had been confined to things of beauty. He assured his hearers that when, a few centuries ago, the men of Siena or Florence wanted to do something to adorn their cities, they did not stop to consider the cost but went ahead and did it and thought about the expense afterward. In contrast with this a prominent officer of a real estate holding company recently expressed his strong disapproval of any widening of streets or readjustment of street lines which were calculated to facilitate traffic whether vehicular or pedestrian. He admitted that such changes might be advantageous to the city at large and would stimulate the development of outlying sections, but as his company owned a large amount of business property in the older part of the city, he believed that the rental value of that particular property for retail shops would be greater if the movement of the people were so obstructed that they would be compelled to loiter, to look into the shop windows and go in and buy. We may have less patience with the latter than with the former point of view, vet both are inimical to real progress in city planning. He who scorns any consideration of cost may by his enthusiasm succeed in committing the city to projects which will seriously cripple its finances for years to come

and render the public suspicious of any improvement, while he who openly avows his supreme selfishness may possibly arouse a feeling of indignation which will result in bringing about the very things he would like to prevent.

The question of how the bills are to be paid is not only a pertinent but a necessary one and cannot be avoided. To provide for a city of one hundred thousand, with no apparent reason for exceptional growth, an ambitious scheme suited to a metropolis of several millions is to invite disaster; while to limit the plan of a large and rapidly growing city occupying a strategic position to one suited to its present size will seriously retard its future orderly development and may prevent it from realizing the growth and importance of which its natural advantages appear to give promise.

The feeling is common and not unnatural that if we are planning more for the future than the present, coming generations which will reap the benefit should bear the greater part of the burden. It seems easy to pay with borrowed money, particularly when the money can be borrowed for fifty years, or the span of two generations. The habit of paying in this way is easily acquired and is broken with difficulty. When anything is paid for with money borrowed for a period longer than the possible or even probable life of the article purchased, the city's credit is improperly used. A corporation which pays for its betterments from earnings is on a sound basis. When large earnings are used to pay excessive dividends, and betterments and renewals are paid from borrowed money representing additional obligations, there is danger. When interest on existing debt is paid from funds raised by incurring more debt, disaster is imminent. The only source of revenue of the American city is its power to tax. Its credit is due to this same power plus the value of its own property. The larger the city's debt which has been incurred for projects which are not self-sustaining, the greater will be the demands upon its taxing power to meet interest and sinking fund charges

due to such debt, and the less will be its ability to undertake new improvements and at the same time meet the enormous running expense of the modern city. It might not be a forced comparison to say that the ordinary services which the city renders to the public through its administrative departments, the expenses of which are met by the regular tax levy, are the dividends which it pays to its stockholders, while for its betterments it must issue bonds or levy special assessments. Every bond issue requires an increase in the tax levy for a term of years in order to meet interest and amortization charges, curtailing by just so much the amount which can be expended upon municipal housekeeping expenses. In order to keep the tax rate within reasonable limits, expenses which should properly be met from the tax levy are often paid with borrowed money. Is not the city which adopts this policy actually doing the same thing as the business corporation which incurs additional debt in order to pay dividends?

The class of improvements which are commonly considered city planning projects are not self-sustaining. They consist for the most part in the correction of defects due to lack of proper planning. The property affected by them has presumably been already assessed for the acquisition and improvement of streets which were at the time considered adequate for its local needs. The widening and rearrangement of streets in built-up sections will, however, improve conditions and increase values, and a part of the expense should, therefore, be placed upon the property benefited. In the more fundamental work of city planning, where unoccupied territory is being developed, the property will not have been assessed for improvements, and consequently the cost of the acquisition and construction of new streets can properly be assessed upon the adjoining property according to benefit, such benefit representing the entire cost in the case of local streets and a portion of the cost in the case of thoroughfares of metropolitan importance. One principle should be invariably recognized,

namely, where there is local benefit there should be local assessment. There can be no improvement which has been intelligently planned and executed which will not result in some local benefit, and it follows that there should always be some local assessment. No improvement, however small or however large, will be of equal benefit to the entire city, and to distribute the burden of paying for it over the whole city according to taxable values is unfair in that it is not placed according to benefit. The owners of property in the immediate vicinity are frequently enriched at the expense of those whose holdings are entirely outside the district directly affected.

Perhaps this statement should be so qualified as to exclude certain great improvements such as public buildings, bridges, docks, and rapid transit lines, and yet there is doubtless a local benefit resulting from these. It may be urged that such things are not included in what is commonly called city planning. If so, the definition of city planning needs revision, for they are certainly most essential parts of any city plan. The City Club of New York several years ago showed that as a result of the building of the first Rapid Transit Subway in New York the actual land values in those portions of upper Manhattan and The Bronx which were most directly affected were within seven years increased \$80,500,000 above the normal increase for that period. The cost of that part of the subway passing through the districts where this rise in values took place was about \$13,000,000, while the cost of the entire subway from the Battery north was \$43,000,000. It is quite evident that if the \$13,000,000 which was spent upon that part of the subway traversing the district so notably benefited had been assessed directly upon the property, its owners would still have netted a neat profit of some \$67,500,000, while had the cost of the entire subway been assessed upon the same limited district, the net profit to the land owners would have been \$37,500,000. Was it quite fair that property in distant parts of the city, entirely unaffected by

this great project, should bear the same proportion of the burden as that which was so conspicuously advantaged? It is true that this improvement is entirely self-supporting, interest and amortization charges being provided from the rental paid by the operating company; but the local benefit was so clearly established that the Rapid Transit Law was so amended as to permit the assessment of any part of the cost of future subways. Many new subways are now being planned, and some are being built, but it is doubtful if any of them will be self-supporting for years, the route furnishing the most intensive traffic having been followed by the line first built. The property owners along the present operating line having secured their benefit without direct tax, those along the proposed lines are not enthusiastic about being assessed for theirs, and there seems little prospect that the right to assess will be availed of.

To take another illustration from New York, — two new court houses are about to be built, one in New York County, the other in Kings County. In the former case a site has been selected to include a large area which will provide sites for still other public buildings and result in the creation of a real civic center. What will be the effect upon the neighboring property of the expenditure of the millions required for this site and buildings? There is abundant evidence to justify the prediction that its value will be doubled, if not trebled, by the time the first building has been completed. Is it fair or just that the owners of this contiguous property should be enriched through no action of their own, and that they should bear only the same proportion of the expense, according to their taxable values, as will those owning property ten miles distant?

It needs no extended argument to prove the equity and wisdom of local assessment wherever there is local benefit. That it has been done to such a limited extent in the past is no reason why it should not be more generally done in the future. That certain property owners have heretofore been treated with such prodigal liberality is no good reason

why others should fatten through a continuation of an irrational and essentially unfair policy. To the degree that the assessment plan is adopted, to that same degree will the city place itself upon a cash rather than upon a credit basis. It may be urged that the adoption of such a policy would discourage the agitation for and execution of many desirable city planning projects, that American cities have been slow to appreciate the advantages of intelligent city planning, and now that there has been a marked awakening it would be unwise to suggest the adoption of a policy which might dampen this new-born enthusiasm. A desire for something which involves no direct cost is not a sign of intelligent interest. We are learning that the improvement of our cities pays. That is a hopeful sign. If we have simply reached the stage where we want better conditions only if someone else is to pay the bills, the hope has not a very substantial basis. If we want them badly enough to pay for them ourselves in proportion to the benefit we feel sure will follow, we are making real progress.

Assuming that a case has been made in favor of assessing the cost of all improvements in accordance with prospective benefit, we are still confronted with a very difficult problem. The direct and indirect benefit must be estimated in advance. We cannot first carry out our city planning schemes and afterwards determine how the cost is to be met. Furthermore, we must determine to what extent the benefit will be strictly local, in what degree it will extend to a larger tributary area, and, again, how much it will mean to the entire city or metropolitan district. In the case of residential streets, the purpose of which is to give light, air and access to the dwellings located upon them, the benefit will be entirely local, and the entire cost can properly be imposed upon the abutting property. When a highway is given a more generous width in the expectation that it will be called upon to accommodate a certain amount of through traffic, the benefit is more general, and the assessment area in such a case may be extended to a line midway between it

and the next street of more than residential width. The major part of the cost should, however, be confined to the abutting property, so that the cost to it shall be somewhat more than that of the narrower street. In the case of arterial thoroughfares, or in that of the first street to be opened through an undeveloped territory, the effect of which will be to give access to and stimulate the development of a large area, the district of benefit will be correspondingly enlarged. Again, in the case of thoroughfares of exceptional width which it is proposed to treat as boulevards, the entire city or metropolitan district will be substantially benefited and should bear a portion of the expense; in fact, the state itself may derive an advantage which would justify its assumption of a portion of the cost; but the disposition to recognize such an obligation on the part of the commonwealth is exceedingly rare, even though a great city within its limits may, through its large taxable values, contribute the larger part of the state's revenues by which its rural highway system is maintained.

In the case of parks this same principle might be applied. Some small parks are of strictly local benefit, and their cost could properly be placed upon the district in which they are located. Every park, whether small or large, is of some local benefit, even if such benefit were deemed to consist solely in unobstructed light and air to the property on the surrounding streets.

In the case of street widening or the cutting through of new streets, the local advantage is less marked, though it will always follow. The mere fact that a widening or extension is required to accommodate traffic is conclusive evidence that the street has assumed more than local importance. The width of the roadway as widened is not an index of its local or general importance. There may be cases where the opening up of a new street of a width commonly given to local streets and extending for a very short distance would on account of its strategic position be of very great general and of little local benefit.

It is quite apparent that the relative local, district, or general benefit of any street or other improvement can be determined neither by its dimensions nor its cost. An improvement involving an expenditure of \$1,000,000 in one part of the city may be more distinctly local in its beneficial effect than one costing \$50,000 in another section. No fixed rule can be established to govern the distribution of expense. It must be determined in each case after a painstaking investigation. Such investigation should not be entrusted to a different individual, board or commission in each case. There should be a permanent body which should act in all This body should not be large, and it should be so constituted that its entire personnel could not be changed at once, thus insuring continuity and consistency of policy. They should be broad men whose training should have fitted them for their difficult and delicate duties. The misleading evidence commonly called expert testimony as to existing and prospective values will be of little assistance to them. They should be capable by experience and intelligence of forming their own conclusions.

While no definite rule can be adopted to govern the distribution of assessments representing the district and general benefit, it should be possible to prescribe a method of determining the amount and extent of local benefit, particularly in the case of new streets, boulevards and parks. Let us assume that sixty feet is the normal and maximum width required for a local street; then the entire cost of acquiring and improving all streets sixty feet or less in width may properly be placed upon the property within a half block on either side of the street. In the case of wider streets that proportion of the cost represented by the ratio which sixty feet plus twenty-five per cent of the excess over sixty feet bears to the width of the street would probably be an equitable proportion to assess upon the local district. Inasmuch as property fronting a wide street is more valuable, it would be manifestly unfair to adopt a rule which would result in making the cost of a seventy or eighty foot

street less to the abutting owner than would have been the cost of a street sixty feet wide. On the other hand, after a street reaches certain proportions, additional width will not involve additional benefit. It may be assumed that a share of the expense which would be equivalent to paying for a street eighty feet wide should represent the limit of local assessment. This limit would be reached under the rule proposed when the street becomes one hundred and forty feet wide. The percentage of cost which would be locally assessed would, therefore, be as follows for various street widths: 60 feet, 100%; 70 feet, 89.3%; 80 feet, 81.25%; 90 feet, 75%; 100 feet, 70%; 120 feet, 62.5%; 140 feet, 57.1%; 150 feet, 53.3%; 200 feet, 40%.

In the case of parks the problem is more difficult, the amount of local assessment and the extent of the area of local benefit being determined by the size and shape of the park and facility of access to it from other parts of the city. In any case, no rule should be adopted until it has been carefully tested and it has been demonstrated that the assessments levied in accordance with it will constantly decrease with the distance from the improvement. decrease should not be directly in proportion to the distance, but in a geometrical ratio. A curve to determine the distribution of the assessment after the limits of the district have been decided has been proposed by Mr. Arthur S. Tuttle, Assistant Chief Engineer of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of New York City, in accordance with which about 32.5% of the assessment would be placed upon the first 10% of the distance to the outer limit of the area of benefit, 55% upon the first 25%, and 80% upon the district extending half way to the boundary of the assessment area.

In the case of street widening involving the destruction of buildings, it is suggested that the same general principles be adopted as in the case of new streets, but that they be applied to the land values only. If the street were less than sixty feet wide, the proportion of the expense for additional

land in order to make it sixty feet would be assessed upon the half block on each side, while for all excess over sixty feet the same rule already proposed could be adopted. For instance, if a street fifty feet wide were to be widened to eighty feet, involving the acquisition of thirty feet of additional property, the first ten feet required to make it sixty feet and 25% of the twenty feet over sixty feet, - a total of fifteen feet, or one-half of the cost of the additional land to be taken, - might be assessed locally, the expense involved in damage to buildings being included in the district assessment, or in the general assessment if the improvement were of sufficient importance to involve general benefit. If the same street were to be widened to one hundred feet, the local assessment under the same rule would be for twenty of the fifty feet to be acquired, or 40% of the total land damage, the damage to buildings, as before, being included in the district or general assessment.

Special cases will undoubtedly arise which would require special treatment, but it is probable that in the great majority of improvements the method proposed would result in an equitable distribution of the burden. Those who are to pay the bills have a right to know in advance how the costs are to be apportioned, and the formulation of a policy which can be consistently followed is not only desirable but necessary.

The problem of determining whether or not there is general benefit and the proportion of the cost representing such benefit will be difficult. A typical case is that of a new boulevard recently laid out in the City of New York and now being acquired. It has been given a width of 200 feet and extends from one of the great bridges over the East River directly across the Borough of Queens to Jamaica, and it is expected that it will ultimately be carried to the ocean front. It will afford ready access not only to the highway system of the Borough of Queens, but to all of Long Island. It includes within its lines an existing highway about eighty feet in width. Owing to its strategic posi-

tion, this boulevard will be of more than local benefit. It was thought proper in this case to assess upon an area extending eight hundred feet on each side that proportion of the cost of acquiring title represented by increasing the existing highway from eighty feet to one hundred feet. Of the remaining one hundred feet it was decided to impose three-eighths upon the Borough of Queens and five-eighths upon the city at large. This division would have placed upon the local area, the borough and the city, 16.7%, 31.2%, and 52.1%, respectively, but these were rounded off to 20%, 30%, and 50%. In the improvement of this highway it is proposed to construct one central driveway fortyfour feet wide, with parking spaces thirty feet wide on each side, and outside of these side roadways twenty-eight feet and sidewalks twenty feet in width, the side roadways and walks to be treated strictly as local improvements and the cost of their construction to be assessed directly upon the abutting property, the central driveway and parking spaces to be treated as a part of the park system and to be built at the expense of the entire city. It is believed that such a distribution of the expense is just, but there has been a disposition to consider it a precedent for similar treatment in the case of other streets where the general public benefit would be far less, while in some instances there would be none.

Demands for the apportionment of the expense of local streets as though they were thoroughfares of metropolitan importance must be consistently denied, however powerful may be the influences exerted to induce special treatment in certain cases. A policy which is manifestly just will ultimately win popular favor. To hastily adopt a plan for the distribution of costs which afterwards proves unworkable, and which must, therefore, be modified, will involve some injustice as between those who may have been assessed by one plan and those whose burdens may be determined by a revised plan. The policy should, therefore, be carefully studied and thoroughly tested before its adoption, after which it should be consistently adhered to. It follows that

such a policy should be confined to principles, rather than be expressed in percentages, for special cases will inevitably occur where a principle can be applied, while a rigid rule involving fixed percentages would entail serious hardship.

There is one other method by which the expense of city planning projects could be met, at least in part, namely, through recoupment by the exercise of the right of excess condemnation where this right exists, but this subject is to be treated in another paper, and is simply referred to in this connection.

Where the financial condition of the city will permit, the burdens of the property owner can be considerably lightened by the recognition of deferred benefit and a correspondingly deferred assessment. In this case the city would carry the account until the benefit resulting from the improvement should have been fully realized, or, in other words, should have been reflected in actual increase in values. Similar relief could be given by permitting the payment of assessments in installments carrying a moderate rate of interest. Either plan would require larger capital to finance such improvements, and would to that extent impair the city's borrowing capacity for other purposes. These, however, are matters of detail and have to do with the manner of collection of the assessments rather than the distribution of the expense. The general principles which should, in the writer's opinion, govern the distribution of the cost of city improvements may be briefly summarized as follows:

- 1. Where there is local benefit, there should always be local assessment.
- 2. The entire city or the metropolitan district should bear no part of the expense unless the improvement is in some degree of metropolitan importance and benefit.
- 3. Assessments should not be confined to the cost of acquiring and improving streets, but should extend to any improvement which will increase the value of the neighbor-

ing property, and should be apportioned as nearly as possible according to the probable benefit.

4. A workable policy once adopted should be consist-

ently adhered to.

5. The determination of a policy and its application to each case should be entrusted to a board composed of men especially qualified, whose terms of office should so overlap as to insure continuity of policy and purpose.

#### APPENDIX

WHILE a few cities may now have statutory authority to carry out the policy which is outlined in the above paper, most of them lack such power. The following is suggested as an act which, with such modification as local conditions and existing laws may require, would accomplish the purpose.

In all cases where an administrative board is authorized to determine that an improvement is to be made, the said board shall also determine what proportion of the cost and expense of the said improvement shall be assessed upon the property which shall be deemed to be benefited thereby and what proportion of the cost and expense thereof shall be borne and paid

by the city.

The said board may also determine in each case how much of the cost and expense of an improvement shall be assessed upon a restricted area of peculiar benefit and how much, if any, shall be assessed upon a larger area of indirect benefit. The said board may also determine whether the entire assessment shall become due upon confirmation of the same, or whether it may be paid in annual installments, and it shall also determine the number of such annual installments in which such assessments may be paid and the rate of interest which shall be charged upon all such installments from the date of the confirmation of the assessment until each installment shall be paid; provided, however, that the number of installments shall not exceed and the rate of interest to be charged upon the same shall be not less than nor more than per cent per annum.

The word "improvement" as used in this section (or act) shall be deemed to include the acquisition of title in fee or easement to any land required for streets, parks, bridges, tunnels, waterways, drains, sewers or buildings required for any public purpose, or the construction of streets, parks, bridges, tunnels, waterways, drains, sewers or buildings, or any other improvement, the carrying out of which in whole or in part will increase the value of the property in the immediate vicinity of such improvement or within a district including the same, or will promote public utility, comfort, health or adornment for the entire city or part thereof.

# PAYING THE BILLS FOR CITY PLANNING FROM A BOSTON VIEWPOINT

### HON. JAMES A. GALLIVAN

Street Commissioner, Boston

A FEW days ago a Boston newspaper briefly referring to the approaching visit to our city of gentlemen who compose this association, advised the city's representatives at these gatherings not to concede too much to the delegates who are here from beyond our borders who may feel prompted to criticise Boston because it is not "laid out" on the checkerboard pattern. The writer of the paragraph was apparently anxious that we should let you folks know that we are conscious of the structural shortcomings which were imposed upon us by earlier centuries, and which many a city has been able to avoid by reason of the fact that it was built the other day. And while we were advised to acknowledge cheerfully that our streets are narrow, that our waterfront is not all that it should be, that we still accommodate a few slum districts, and cannot hope to hide certain waste areas that should have been developed years ago, we were not to forget to let you know that we are now widening some of our streets, that we are building up the waste areas, and have already started the great work for the improvement of the port of Boston.

Boston is indeed honored in the presence of this Conference in its city, and fortunate in the opportunity afforded of acquiring at first hand a knowledge of the proper and scientific solution of those varied problems that have grown to be such serious defects in the civic and social life of our American municipalities. The modern city planning move-

ment, conceived largely in this country in the desire to cure the evil of congestion of population, has now become an all-embracing study. The great broad field of human endeavor, all the complex forces of social and industrial life, private and public interests, individual and collective coöperation all bear important relation to the science of city planning, but underlying all, as a practical matter of compelling interest, is the question of the city streets, those great arteries through which flows its life blood and the basis of its prosperity and proper healthy growth.

I regret to state that Boston with respect to the science of city planning offers little of an instructive nature, unless it be to teach the lesson of the futility of not looking beyond one's generation in the planning of the streets of the city, and the dangers of inadequate laws constituting almost insuperable obstacles in the way of systematic improvement.

There is a growing tendency, of late years, to recognize the charm of the irregular and informal plans evolved out of the necessities of the times. Old Boston with its crooked and twisting ways is rich in historic associations; it appeals to the patriot, the romanticist and the esthete; some of the old streets are hallowed spots where stirring scenes of our country's history were enacted, and are still fragrant with the memory of our Revolutionary heroes; but there is also the practical aspect which must be considered if the city's industrial needs are to be served, if the commercial life is to be given free and convenient means of circulation and the population afforded adequate facilities for transportation and communication.

Unfortunately here in Boston we are forced to recognize deplorable street conditions in the business section of the city which, uncorrected, are bound to hamper its growth, and, worse still, we are forced supinely to contemplate the evil because ill-advised legislation prevents the remedying of the defects on a proper financial basis. The streets of business Boston today are choked with foot and vehicle

traffic, not a sudden culmination by any means, nor the result of unforeseen development, but rather because the population and trade of the city have increased in a natural way with no effort made from year to year for devising a well-formulated scheme of relief. Like many of our large American cities we have progressed beyond that stage where a comprehensive plan, starting with an imposing civic center and embracing radical and circumferential highways could be realized, but eventually American ingenuity will bring cosmos out of the chaos of the immature and impulsive planning of past years, so that what Voltaire said of his own Paris, "We see every day what is wanting in our city and content ourselves with murmuring," may not forever be said of us.

At the third national conference in Philadelphia it was decided that, in the scheme of city planning or replanning, the cost of local improvements should be paid for by special assessments upon the benefited districts. In our theory of law this form of tax represents an enhancement of private values. Boston's special assessment law was enacted in 1891 and was designed to return to the city practically the entire cost of such work, but ten years after its passage, during which time millions had been expended for improvements, litigation and the importunate demands of realty owners for a change in the law led to the enactment of legislation which compelled the city to assume at least one-half of the cost of every street improvement it effected, and to limit its assessable districts to within one hundred twenty-five feet of the street opened or improved; it is under such unwise restrictions that this city today is laboring. Forty millions of Boston's outstanding funded debt has been issued for street and sewer improvements from which tremendous private profits have resulted.

I believe it is fundamentally wrong for a state legislature to compel a city to assume a fixed proportion of the cost of its street improvements. This should be determined by the municipal body or officers charged with the duty

of making the assessment. The Federal Supreme Court has laid down the rule that these charges must be limited by the measure of the benefit conferred, but this principle was enunciated, I submit, no more to afford protection to the owner of land against the imposition of oppressive charges than to indicate to what extent cities might justly demand reimbursement for those expenditures of public funds which result in private gain. If the right of the city to assess for local improvements is to be qualified in the authorizing statute the classes of street improvements should be differentiated for assessment purposes according to functional needs. The cost of constructing a forty-foot residential street should be borne entirely by abutting land owners. In some cities the entire expense of streets, openings and widenings up to sixty feet in width are assessed on contiguous land. The streets exceeding forty feet in width are usually built in response to general public demands, not alone to furnish ordinary street facilities to abutting land; and as the width increases, so the direct benefit to abutting land becomes a proportionately smaller part of the whole cost and the benefited district expands. It is only fair to expect the city to assume a part of the cost of the more pretentious improvements, such as boulevards, main highways and traffic thoroughfares, but the point I wish to emphasize is, that the practical determination of special assessments should be delegated to the municipality whose officials are of necessity familiar with the nature and scope of the work for which the charges are levied as well as the character and value of properties within the assessable districts. These restrictions are usually imposed by legislative bodies at the behest of real estate interests, and the lack of wisdom shown by such laws is well evidenced by that provision in our Massachusetts statute which compels a limitation of assessable districts to a distance of 125 feet from the improvement in entire disregard of the actual distances and area of the benefit conferred. The inadequacy of a

law delimiting assessable districts is well shown by the assessment levied on account of the Bennington Street boulevard constructed in this city a few years ago at a cost of \$700,000. An assessment was made of \$56,000, about 8 per cent, and the legislature, at the request of persons assessed, has recently passed an act recommending the abatement of even this meagre sum. The fact that the legislative enactment, according to our Federal Supreme Court, as far as assessable districts are concerned, is not open to review by the court, does not justify such a law.

The truth of the matter, in regard to this method of financing local improvements, is that the ordinary taxpayer looks with particular resentment upon special assessments of any kind. General taxation is regarded and anticipated as an incident to the ownership of real estate, a pure civic responsibility, but it is an extremely different matter to convince owners that the construction of local improvements enhances the value of their holdings, and the frankest professions and assurance of willingness to pay assessments made at the time these improvements are sought, very frequently are transferred, after completion of the work, into feelings of antagonism which often culminate in long-drawn-out litigations. In many instances, I will admit, this antagonism is justified. The restriction of assessments to a radius of 125 feet necessitates the limitation of the amount assessed to 50 per cent of the cost, because it seldom happens (and then only in 40-foot residential street openings) that the benefit of the improvement within the limited radius exceeds or even equals this percentage. This is particularly true in those parts of Boston where the benefit, as measured by the rise of valuations in the immediate vicinity, proves disappointing. So that, after all, there is a perverse consistency in the yoking together of these two limitations, each of which in itself is unjust to the city as a whole.

The logical result of the inability of the city to get back even a reasonable percentage of its outlay from the

property owners has been a reduction of activity in this direction. In other cities, as, for example, in New York, where the property owners over a wide area pay the larger part of the cost, the authorities may go ahead boldly and satisfy the demands of traffic by laying out new thoroughfares at will; but in Boston every such venture means a considerable addition to the debt of the city.

At the same time our needs are perhaps greater than those of the newer cities, because of our complicated highway plan, narrow streets and congested business district. The pressure of absolute necessity has led to the examination of new methods of assessment for street construction, culminating in the partial adoption, by means of a constitutional amendment, of what is known as the excess condemnation method. This system has been favored elsewhere because it enables the city to take over the remnants or odds and ends of estates which in some of our thoroughfares, as well as in those of New York, have led to a motley and irregular frontage, offensive to lovers of symmetry in construction and actually detrimental to the growth of business in the streets affected. Its advocates, moreover, argued, from the experience of foreign cities, that it would enable Boston to pay the whole cost of its street improvements and even reap a profit, where now the only question is the extent of the loss. This seemed to a good many of us at the time a rather roseate view to take, for if the full benefit to the estates within a radius of 125 feet is seldom equal to one-half the cost it would seem difficult for the city to recover the whole cost by taking over the title to the same property, holding it for a term of years, and then reselling it.

However, at our state election last year the people adopted this constitutional amendment. Briefly stated, it permits the legislature to pass acts for street improvements wherein more land than is required for the street may be taken, the same to be sold after the completion of the improvement. This amendment had been agitated for many

years by people who honestly believed it would cause a revolution in the methods of making highway improvements. The advocates of this measure also believed that it would help to solve the question of a city beautiful, because, as I have explained, the city could control the use of the excess land taken by placing upon it restrictions as to the character of buildings to be erected, their height, use and anything else which would satisfy the esthetic tastes of the community. In this respect they are undoubtedly right, but, if our study of the problem amounts to anything, they will fall far short of their expectations on the financial side.

Before entering more fully into a discussion of the possibilities of excess takings, it may not be amiss to say a brief word of an ambitious attempt to apply the principle of excess condemnation in the cities and towns of this Commonwealth. In the statutes of 1904 may be found a comprehensive act which had some of the purposes in view for which you gentlemen of the city planning conference are striving. This act is known as chapter 443 of that year. It was adopted after a careful study of the problem, including personal studies abroad by members of a commission which had been appointed for the purpose, and which actually drew the bill. This act intended to provide that cities and towns, or even the Commonwealth itself, might acquire all of a piece of property, any part of which was to be taken for a highway improvement, and sell the excess of land after the completion of the improvement. A study of the act would be worth the while of any person interested, if for no other purpose than to observe the extreme care exercised in making it, and the safeguards thrown about the property involved.

Though this act has been on the statute books for eight years, I know of no instance of its being invoked. The constitutionality of the act was questioned from the beginning, which probably accounts for its not being used. The existence of the act shows, however, that here in

Boston the subject of correct city planning has long been given serious attention.

Undoubtedly there are opportunities to invoke the excess condemnation provision of our laws in the improvement of highways without great cost to the city. The business centers of large and growing cities undergo changes every few years, due largely to expansion of trade. If this expansion could be gauged with some degree of accuracy, a few years in advance, the street improvements necessary to bring about the best results could probably be made so as to give the city the fullest returns on the expenditure required.

Soon after the adoption of the constitutional amendment about which I am speaking, the Board, of which I am a member, made an exhaustive study of this method of city highway development, with results which, I think, will interest you. I will take but two examples of the study, and I select them because they are widely different in the manner in which they work out.

Nothing is more needed in this city than a broad highway connecting the two terminal stations. Such a highway is particularly needed for teaming traffic and for the transportation of passengers. A plan for such a highway has been prepared. It proposes not only the widening of existing thoroughfares but also the making of an entirely new way through property which has a high market value. The proposition is for a way 100 feet wide. It would be without doubt of tremendous value to a very large section of the city. The assessed value of the property which would be taken for the way itself is \$8,118,811. If only remnants of estates which would be affected by the improvement were taken \$3,804,899 would have to be added.

It is thought that, if the fullest use of the excess condemnation principle is to be applied, takings for a distance of 125 feet from the line of the improvement ought to be made. To make such a taking would involve property having an assessed value of \$7,875,700, making

a total assessed value of all the property involved \$19,799,000.

This is a pretty large sum for a city whose borrowing capacity is less than one-quarter of this sum. Bear in mind that this is only the assessed value. When property is taken for public purposes it is rarely obtained for the assessed value. Perhaps in a case such as I am discussing, where the property has a large and sure rental value, the city might be required to pay as high as 50 per cent over the assessed value for such as would be taken. This would add \$9,899,500 additional to the foregoing figures, making the total about \$28,698,500 for land and buildings.

To get this vast sum back into the city treasury it has been estimated that the excess land would have to sell at 153 per cent over its present assessed value. Can you conceive of such a tremendous enhancement of values merely because the city has laid out a broad highway which would be devoted largely to transportation purposes? For myself I confess I cannot see such a great increase in values immediately following such an improvement.

If such an improvement should be made, under the conditions I have described, ought the city to hold the excess property taken until such time as it could be sold at the advance named? What would the city do with the property while awaiting a favorable market? Ought the city to put it in order for occupancy and rent it during the time it has it on its hands? It seems to me that our constitutional amendment does not contemplate anything of the kind. I doubt that the city could even put new fronts into buildings that had been partially destroyed, and if it cannot do this, imagine what an unsightly condition a street would be in, with the interiors of buildings exposed with hideous effect.

Unless the city could improve such buildings and rent them while awaiting a favorable market the disadvantages of such a method of street improvements would be far greater than any possible benefits. There would, in

addition, be the loss of taxes, no inconsiderable item, and the interest on the money borrowed for the undertaking.

As showing that there is some merit in the principle of excess condemnation, I have in mind a street in this city which it is proposed to improve, and which, judging by the estimates, it seems can be done under excess condemnation proceedings to the great advantage of the city. This street is in line of the development of the Park Square lands, so-called, the abandoned site of a railroad station. It is proposed to widen this street, taking property which, it is estimated, will be damaged to the extent of about \$900,000. It so happens that a large portion of the property to be taken is either owned or controlled by the New Haven Railroad, whose representatives show a disposition to treat with the city on an extremely liberal basis.

The total cost of this improvement, including excess takings, is estimated at \$950,000. It is further estimated that the net cost to the city would be but \$100,000, because it is believed a ready market at a good price would be found for the excess land which would be sold by the city.

A betterment assessment is involved in the foregoing, which is an important factor in bringing the net cost of this improvement down to the low sum of \$100,000. For this improvement it is proposed to allow the city authorities to assess wherever they may find a benefit, and to assess the full benefit, which in my judgment is the right way.

Now, in addition, this would be an improvement which would aid in bringing into the market a large tract of land which has lain dormant for many years, and perhaps, the creation of a new retail center, carrying its benefits far beyond the street itself, thus adding greatly to the taxable value of the city and in a short time wiping out every expenditure which the city has made.

If a broad highway, such as is proposed between the north and scuth terminals, is to be laid out, I believe it can be done without great cost to the city and without invoking the aid of the excess condemnation law, by extending the

assessable area and by assessing the benefit rather than 50 per cent of the cost. I would create a zone for assessing purposes. This zone could be made wide enough to recover back practically all that the improvement would cost. If a tunnel is to be constructed under the street for the railroad, as has been proposed, I would have the railroad pay a fair portion of the cost of the construction of the highway.

The zone system of assessments could be justly applied to an improvement of this character because it would be an improvement which would be of benefit to almost the entire business district of the city by giving the whole-sale and retail houses better and more rapid facilities for carrying on their business.

On the whole, however, I do not see any great benefit in excess condemnation methods except in isolated cases. The advocates of this method, from what I have been able to glean, have had the impression that it was a great success abroad. The principle has been well tried in London, and it is not a success there, viewed from the standpoint of cost. As showing its failure in this respect, I will quote a paragraph from the report of the London Traffic Branch of the Board of Trade, made in 1904, as follows:

"It is difficult to make any direct comparison of the relative advantages of widening old, and making new streets. Both operations are necessarily costly. It is often supposed to be more economical to make a new street if enough land is taken, but the expectation that the disposal of valuable sites fronting an improvement repays, or nearly repays, the original outlay is seldom borne out by experience. The most striking example of success attending an operation of this kind is Northumberland Avenue, where the amount realized by the disposal of surplus land exceeded the cost of the improvement by 119,000 pounds (\$595,000). This amount was, however, arrived at without taking the charges for interest on the outlay into account, and these charges could not have been small, since some six years elapsed

after the completion of the improvement before any of the surplus land was let. The satisfactory result in this case was due mainly to the fact that the operation did not involve the acquisition of valuable trade interests, and that land in such a central situation was much in request. The street, moreover, is short. A new street of considerable length is apt to fill up slowly, and as years may elapse before all the building sites are disposed of, a large addition to the net cost may have to be made by way of interest."

From the studies of the Board of which I am a member, I am convinced that here in Boston we would get similar results.

Answering then the query, who shall pay the cost of city planning, I believe there is no good reason, moral, legal or economic, why the millions expended by our American municipalities for streets, sewers, parks, sidewalks, water-front improvements and subways should not be returned to them in generous proportion by land owners who reap such tremendous resultant profits.

#### DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN, HON. LAWSON PURDY, New York City:

Before the floor is open for discussion, on behalf of those of my associates in the city of New York who have sought from the legislature and the people further powers of condemnation, I want to say that we are often much impressed by the notion expressed that the reason why we want excess condemnation in the city of New York is because we want to make money. No idea could be more mistaken. We do not care if it costs us more to accomplish a city plan, the widening of a street or the opening of a new street, when we take more land than is necessary for the street. It may cost us more money to do it, but we will have building land that can be put to suitable economic uses; and we will not have any more

streets, of which we have too many already, where improvements cannot be made on account of obstructive parcels of land of inadequate size and unusable shape. To many of us it has not seemed a question of getting back the money that the improvement costs, but of having a suitable street when it is finished, that will be of value to the community and to the property owners, and of saving those persons who own land on the street from assessments for local improvements which are a great burden, when they cannot use the land. If incidentally we ever make any profit, well and good. I do not see how a profit can be made, however, out of a situation which involves the payment for the improvement by the people who own the abutting land, if you take the land away from them and keep it yourself. That land has got to pay the expense, whether the city owns it or the people own it; and I hope in the discussion a little more weight will be given to that aspect of the case.

### MR. L. L. TRIBUS, Borough of Richmond, New York:

There is one thing that occurs to my mind in considering the very admirable paper of Mr. Lewis. I think we all agree with the principle of direct assessment. There is, however, in all our cities another thing to be considered. If every city had as its head the same efficient sort of executive as our chairman of this morning's session, whom the city of New York has at the head of its Tax Department, there would not be so much money lost by neglect of the principle of assessment for betterments. Mr. Lewis called attention to the fact that often from these large improvements not directly assessed there is large direct benefit to the owner, and the inference is that the owner pays nothing for that direct benefit. But I think we all realize that the owner does pay. When Mr. Purdy's department, for instance, learns of the sale of a certain piece of property within such a benefited district, although there may not have been a direct betterment tax that would cover it,

his assessors jack up the assessment a little higher, and the owner pays on that enhanced value, and pays not for the ten years perhaps over which the benefit might be assessed, but for all time. Perhaps he finds the next year that the value of that property has enhanced a little more. Up goes the assessment. We will assume that the value of that property is doubled, due to that improvement. The Tax Department does not necessarily double the assessed valuation, but it will probably saddle fifty per cent of that increase on the property and that tax goes on for all time.

ANDREW WRIGHT CRAWFORD, Esq., Philadelphia:

In the discussion this morning there has been some intimation that the methods of excess condemnation and of assessments for betterments are to be considered as alternatives.

There are really four methods of paying for the execution of city planning schemes, each of which is supplementary to the others. None is the alternative of any other. The four methods are: excess condemnation, assessment for benefits, increase in taxable values outside of the assessment and excess condemnation areas, and increase in the taxable values of the land either specially assessed or taken by the method of excess condemnation and resold. There is indeed a fifth source from which the cost will be recouped which I will refer to hereafter.

In Philadelphia we benefited by taking advantage of the principle of excess condemnation in the case of Fairmount Park under the original Act; where a part of a tract was required for the park, the whole could be taken and the excess sold. Three or four remnants have been sold at a considerable increase over the cost of acquiring them some thirty or forty years ago.

The process of excess condemnation, of course, may be successful in one instance and may not be successful in another. It may bring back ten per cent more than the cost in one case and 110 per cent in another. Obviously

we are not to decide as to the absolute value of excess condemnation from the results of one, two or three operations. But European cities which have used it continue to do so, and this fact furnishes satisfactory evidence of its practical value.

The second method of paying for improvements, by local assessments for betterments, has been emphasized by Mr. Lewis.

The effect of the improvement will not be confined to the area specially assessed or to the land acquired by excess condemnation. It will gradually spread and be felt over a considerably learger area, resulting in the third method of paying for improvements—a general increase in taxable values that will be very real though difficult to analyze with accuracy.

The fourth source of meeting the expense is much more easily defined. When land is acquired by the process of excess condemnation and resold, the city will not only gain the increment in value between the purchase and the selling price, but, in addition the property will thereafter be assessed at or about the reselling price, thus increasing the annual income of the city. For example, let us suppose the excess land acquired costs \$1,000,000, and is sold at \$1,500,000. The city will gain directly, by the increment, a half million dollars. Assuming that the assessment for taxation purposes is at 80% of the value, the city was receiving, before the improvement, income from that property on the basis of \$800,000. After the improvement, and after the resale, with the assessment on the same basis, it will receive income from that property on an assessment of \$1.200.000 — an addition to the income that will take care of a considerable portion of the interest and sinking fund charges of any bond issue that may have been made in order to undertake the improvement.

Similarly, after property has been locally assessed for benefits, its annual assessment for taxation purposes will be higher, with a corresponding increase in the city's annual income.

It seems to me that as a Conference we have not justly emphasized what a wholesale reconstruction may mean to a community in creating or enhancing another source of revenue. I refer to the city's waterfront. We know that European cities have secured large returns from the reconstruction of their waterfronts. We know that London spent \$11,000,000 in constructing the four miles of the Thames Embankment during the years 1855–1875. The City secured a new thoroughfare, got land for parks, sites for the Hotel Cecil, the Hotel Savoy and other structures of high value, and, at the same time, one of its greatest attractions. London is but one of a hundred cities where similar results have been obtained.

In America we are continually suffering economic loss because of our neglect of the waterfronts. In Philadelphia, property near the Schuylkill is assessed for \$3,000 or \$4,000 a lot, where it ought to be assessed for \$125,000 a lot. Why is that so? Merely because Philadelphia has turned its back on the river and has left it to the railroads. The railroads ought to be there, but they ought to be there under proper conditions as they are in London, as they are in Paris. Four-track railroads run under the Thames Embankment in London and transcontinental railroads under the Seine Embankment in Paris. The electrification of railroads will make it easier to operate them in tunnels under embankments. The time cannot be distant when the regeneration of our waterfronts will be undertaken.

When it is done, our American cities will realize not only how much they have heretofore lost in the beauty of their cities, but also how much in the way of income. The waterfront should be the highest taxed area of the city, not the lowest.

When we have constructed such improvements, a fifth method of paying the bills of city planning will be apparent. How much of the bills for the replanning of Vienna, of Budapest, and of Paris, have been paid by the money of tourists? The beautification of large cities brings people

there, and visitors are spenders. They say that Baron Haussmann spent two hundred million dollars on public improvements in Paris, but they say also that visitors leave from fifty to sixty million dollars a year in Paris. Berlin has learned the lesson. It is making itself beautiful; so is Vienna, so is Budapest.

The power of beauty is just as strong on this side of the Atlantic as on the other side. Our cities can be made beautiful, and it can be made to pay and will pay in dollars and cents.

## MR. R. A. POPE, New York City:

The Conference may have the impression that excess condemnation has not been as financially successful as I think the results show in England. The most notable example is that of the improvement which Mr. Joseph Chamberlain of Birmingham instituted in Birmingham. They put a very broad and fine street right through the heart of the city, where the worst slums were, thereby connecting with a fine thoroughfare the two sides of an important city. It is estimated that the returns will be at least fifty million dollars per year. Of course, as has been said, there is no rule by which you can figure the profit from excess condemnation. As a general thing, however, it has worked out very well indeed. In connection with the reference Mr. Crawford made to the improvement on the banks of the Thames, he ought to have said, I think, that the Duke of Northumberland is reputed to have made sixty million dollars through the extension of his profits.

If private capital is to have its profits by investment and improvement of land, public capital should also get a part of the return which may come from investment in the land.

HON. FREDERIC C. HOWE, New York City:

I have no desire to speak to the text of the papers, but I do want to emphasize my own point of view as to the

extreme importance of the subject matter. It seems to me that, while listening to Mr. Lewis' paper, I got a clearer vision of the way to pay the bills of city planning than I ever had before. It seems to me that that is a classic paper and that this morning's work means the establishment of a kind of norm line, that we are getting to the point where our minds are clear as to the things that should be paid for out of the general purse and the things that should be paid for by those who enjoy special advantages from the improvements which a city makes.

We have no appreciation, I fancy, of the many cities which are precluded from taking any forward step at all, by reason of the fact that real estate interests have so controlled the legislature that it is necessary to pay for every improvement out of the general tax levy. The result is that every suggestion looking to improvement is doomed to defeat, because of the jealousies of various sections of the city and the fear of increased taxation.

We should crystallize the idea as a norm of this Conference that certain enumerated things should be paid for by special assessments on abutting property, and on the property of a larger district. I think Mr. Lewis, more nearly scientifically than I have ever seen it done before, has laid down the principle to be followed in such special assessment work. Most of our cities have assessed at least part or all of the expense of street and sidewalk construction and the installation of a sewer system, and that is as far as they have gone. Yet we find Kansas City, precluded by law from raising money for park purposes, laying out a ten million dollar park and boulevard system by the assessment plan. They compelled the speculators who benefited to pay for it. Denver will pay for its civic center in the same way by assessment of its cost on land included in one of the park districts.

It is interesting to note the psychological effect, the psychological reaction on the part of the community, whether it approves or disapproves of planning. We find

in Kansas City, so I am informed, that the consciousness on the part of all the people that they cannot grab out of the public purse for local improvements, that they cannot log-roll as is done in other cities, has led the public not only to be willing to pay for their benefits but to studiously consider the benefit that flows to them; and I understand that real estate speculators, promoters, developers, have come to appreciate, as in few cities in this country, the benefits flowing from boulevards and park improvements; that now there is a steady demand on the Park Commissioners for improvements there, while in most of the cities with which I am familiar there is a steady pressure against such improvements. I think the psychology of special assessments will make for city planning projects much more than throwing the burden on the general taxpaver.

I hope the papers this morning will be printed in such form that they can be widely distributed, and I hope the executive committee may possibly utilize this crystallization which has taken place to pursue a series of investigations which will result, first, in an enumeration of the things that should be governed by special assessment; second, in a determination of the period through which the payment of special assessments should be carried. I think from these subjects we can get one of the most valuable contributions possible to the program upon which cities are entering.

### Mr. F. L. OLMSTED:

One of the points in Mr. Lewis's paper which particularly interested me, and which was touched on by Mr. Howe at the close of his remarks, was that relating to the period over which the payment of the special assessments should be distributed.

There is also another suggestion as to the carrying by the city of the burden of the special assessment until the improvement in value, the betterment, is clearly apparent, instead of calling for the payment of the assessment when

that benefit is still speculative. There can be no doubt that the great difficulty in trying to get payment for improvements by the special assessment method is the feeling of some doubt on the part of the jury, in case the assessment is contested, whether the assumed improvement in value will really take place. Where that doubt exists a jury is very apt to upset or reduce the assessment.

Therefore, in view of that difficulty, it has seemed to me that, in spite of the objection which Mr. Lewis pointed out, the net return from special assessments might be greater if that method were generally followed, - that juries would sustain special assessments if it were understood to be the rule that they were not to be collected until the betterment actually appeared in the assessed value of the property. It would mean that every year in addition to the regular taxes on the value of the property any increase in its value would be collected as an installment of the betterment assessment until the whole of the latter was paid, or it was demonstrated that the expected increase in value had failed to materialize. I should like particularly to know whether Mr. Lewis knows about the application of that method in any American city, and how it seems to work.

## Mr. Lewis:

I am afraid I cannot answer Mr. Olmsted's question very specifically. New York City, while it labors under some disabilities and has some pretty poor methods, has blazed a pretty safe trail in the matter of assessments for improvements. It assesses all the benefits almost always, and there is no escape. Once in a while, through some technical defect, an assessment is declared invalid. That rarely happens, however, and it does not happen as often as it formerly did. There is but one provision in our charter affecting the levying of assessments for the full value of the improvements, and that is that no assessment for any one improvement shall be levied which amounts to more

than one half of the fair value of the property. That fair value is construed to be its assessed value. It is manifest that, notwithstanding the admirable work of our Tax Department, there are certain districts where the property is not available for development — undeveloped meadow lands, for instance, occupying perhaps a strategic position, which we know will one day be of very great value and which we know that the owners today would not sell, except for a substantial consideration. Yet they cannot be assessed at the value at which the owners hold them, because they are unavailable for development. When we make an improvement, put a new street through that property, we can only collect one half the assessed value, and the full benefit therefore cannot be assessed.

I know of no attempt in this country to exercise the principle of deferred assessments. It is done in Europe quite frequently. We approximate that, however, when we allow the payment of assessments in installments, and in my judgment we come pretty near adjusting any inequality if the installments are extended, say, for a term of ten years, with the right to adjust in connection with the last of those installments, by a reduction in case the actual benefit anticipated has not arrived.

You may say, "That is easy in your case, because you determine the benefit through your own Tax Department by levying assessments. You establish them by taxation, prove your case, and the property owner is helpless." The Tax Department is not going to take chances, deliberately raising the assessed value for the sake of collecting an assessment, if that value has not been clearly indicated through sales.

I am sorry that Commissioner Gallivan has left the room, because he raised a question as to the success of the excess condemnation policy as it has been carried out in England, especially in London. I can say that there is no question whatever of its success. I have not the figures here, but if I remember rightly it was first exercised

in the sixties in the opening of Garrick Street to Covent Garden. In that case, seventy per cent of the cost of the acquisition of the land and the physical improvement of the street was recouped by the sale of the surplusage. Was n't that a success? Of course, they do not all run as high as that. In the case of the widening of a street the name of which I do not recall, on the south side of the Thames, the extension of a new street, including the widening of Tooley Street, only eighteen per cent was recouped. But there was a reason, as they say in Battle Creek. The Housing of the Working Classes Act compels the London County Council when it goes through a new street or disturbs and destroys houses or tenements occupied by working people, to provide accommodations much more satisfactory and wholesome, for the number of people whose dwellings are replaced. That is charged up to this account. yet that eighteen per cent was recouped. Was n't that a success? The Kingsway, as you all know, in Aldwych, opened in 1900 after agitation in Parliament since 1836, has already returned in the sale of surplusage, I am told reliably, ninety per cent of the cost of the improvement, and that amounts to thirty million dollars nearly. Is n't that a success?

I wish I had made more clear in my paper that I do not regard assessments for local benefits and the exercise of the right of excess condemnation as alternatives. I endeavored to point out that it was wrong to make any improvement that would enrich certain property owners without a corresponding assessment. If we use the right of excess condemnation and levy no assessments, we are still enhancing property enormously, and are not asking for a return. The two work together perfectly. The area of assessment should be laid out the same way, whether excess condemnation is exercised or not. The only difference is this, that the city, purchasing more than is required on one or both sides of the street, becomes the abutting owner and is liable to assessment. The city itself, by

exercise of the process of excess condemnation, can recoup a portion of the money, can lighten the burden, can harvest a part of the increase. But under no circumstances, in my judgment, should the principle of assessment for benefit be departed from in the slightest degree, even though we exercise the right of excess condemnation.

### MR. J. P. HYNES, Toronto, Canada:

Mr. Lewis has read to us a splendid paper, and I would like to ask a question in regard to it, so as to bring the thing out clearly. I would like to know how much is purely academic theory, and how much has been applied to actual practice in New York, and, if it has been applied in practice, whether the theory has been sustained by any courts of law.

### MR. LEWIS:

The statements I have made are almost exclusively a record from actual experience.

### THE CHAIRMAN:

For five years and somewhat over, I have sat officially upon the Board of Revision of Assessments of the city of New York. That is the court of appeal from the board of assessors, who make the assessments for local improvements within streets. I do not think that one assessment in a thousand has got into the courts during that five and one half years. I do not think that any invalidity or any occasion to reduce because the assessment was more than half the value of the property assessed, has lost to the city of New York one quarter of one per cent of the assessments levied during that period. It is simple, quick, direct, get your money! The way we get our money is of some little interest, because it is a very humanitarian and effective method. It is comparatively recent in the city of New York, since 1908. When an assessment for a local improvement is made, when any tax becomes a

lien, the owner of the property can wait three years before he pays it, paying in the meantime seven per cent interest. If he allows an assessment for a local improvement, a tax or other charge, to get in arrears more than three years, the city's lien for all the charges against that particular property down to the present is sold at auction for its face value to the person who bids the lowest rate of interest for which he will pay the face value and carry the lien for three years more. We get our money for those liens immediately, in full. We are not bothered with the process of collection. So far it has been an absolute and entire success. There was, for instance, a gentleman in Brooklyn who was terribly frightened for fear he was going to lose his property. They always think of property being sold right away. It is very hard to get into their heads this idea of selling the lien. He came to the collector of assessments and arrears with tears in his eyes, said that his property had cost him a number of thousands of dollars and that he was going to lose it next Tuesday, if something was not done to prevent. He was told not to worry, to attend the sale and see what would happen. The lien on the property was put up for sale. The bidding was active. It was sold for three-fourths of one per cent. Consequently that man had three years more in which to pay his \$2800, in the meantime paying three-fourths of one per cent per annum! That was all that happened to him.

# MR. W. TEMPLETON JOHNSON, San Diego, Cal.:

There has been mention made of opposition to a city's recouping the cost of an improvement by selling surplus land at the increased value. It does not seem to be fair that such a bugaboo as that should be raised, because the German cities practically all go into the buying, selling and keeping of land, just for their own benefit, and so that they may give a little more benefit, to their own people. The discussion has also called to my mind the fact that there is a weapon in New Zealand called a boomerang which

is a very useful weapon in administration of the tax department. In connection with the condemnation of land, the law of New Zealand is that land may be acquired by municipalities for 10 per cent above the assessed valuation. The person who thinks he is assessed too high on his property goes to the city hall and says, "I am assessed too much for my property." The city authorities may immediately take him seriously and say, "Very well, we will buy it from you for 10 per cent more." Then, if he has been taking a foolish position, in regard to the valuation of his property, he either withdraws his complaint or sells his property to the city and pockets a loss.

The summary of a paper by Mr. George C. Warren, of Boston, in discussion of Mr. Lewis's paper, not presented at the time of the Conference, but reprinted here by vote of the Executive Committee.

There may be something of value in a comparison of various methods of meeting the cost of construction and maintenance of street improvements. In Boston 50% of the cost of the first improvement may be assessed on the abutting property, and all subsequent repairs and renewals are paid for from the general budget. In New York the entire first cost is assessed on abutting property, but in other respects the law is much the same as in Boston. In both cities the almost universal result is that the initial pavement adopted is the cheapest type of construction, either gravel or stone macadam. Either many miles of roadway remain out of repair because of insufficient revenue from taxes or from bonds, or, as in New York, pavements are reconstructed by the issue of bonds for long terms of years, very much longer than the reasonable life of pavements. It is stated that New York has many miles of streets that have been reconstructed two or three times out of the proceeds of long term bond issues, the first of which successive bond issues is not yet paid for.

In St. Louis the entire cost of all street improvements and of renewals is assessed on the abutter, and the contractor is given tax bills against each abutter with interest at 7%. Despite the higher rate of interest and the fact that the tax is a lien which takes precedence over mortgages and all other such liabilities, except city taxes, the tax bills are not popular with investors

and are salable only at a heavy discount.

Contrast these methods with the sane and equitable system which Utica has enjoyed for twenty-five years. First, the city pays one-third the cost of all original pavements and all renewals thereof and provides for this out of a

tax of about \$1 per capita of population.

Second, the remaining two-thirds of the cost of the original pavement and all renewals is assessed on the abutting frontage. Assessments may be paid in full or by six annual instalments at 6% interest. To cover the deferred assessments the city issues six paving bonds, each for one-sixth of the whole amount of such deferred assessments, and payable in one, two, three, four, five or six years with 5% interest, the due dates of the bonds and assessments being coincident. The city loses nothing on account of the credit it gives to the taxpayers, and the premium the city gets for the bonds and the 1% extra in-

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terest charged the taxpayers fully pays all clerical or other expense of the city in the transaction.

Third, the city at large pays for minor repairs required between the time of laying the original pavement and the necessity of reconstruction or re-

surfacing.

The practical working out of the system can be illustrated by the typical result on Oneida Street. In 1892 the street was newly paved at an annual cost of about \$200 per lot of 50 feet frontage, the assessment being payable in cash or at the option of each taxpayer in six annual installments of about \$33, with interest, say \$35 per year for six years, including interest. The last installment of the assessment was paid in 1898. Then came thirteen years' respite, and in 1911 the street was resurfaced at a cost of about \$90 for each lot of 50 feet frontage, or if any desired to pay in six annual installments at a cost including interest of less than \$16 per annum. It should be here noted that all this — a thoroughly well paved city — has been accomplished by a general tax of less than one dollar per capita per annum.

### ROUND TABLE TALKS

Introductory Remarks by the Presiding Officer, John Nolen, Fellow American Society of Landscape Architects, Cambridge

I WANT to tell one short story that I heard last Wednesday in Erie, Pennsylvania, from a Dr. MacDonald, whom you probably know as the editor of the Toronto Globe. He had been around seeing Erie in the afternoon, in preparation for the Board of Trade meeting in the evening, and at that meeting he said he was struck by the combination that the city afforded. On one side he found growth. expansion of the great industries, especially at the big plant of the General Electric Company, which has recently settled in Erie; and, on the other hand, he was struck by the attractiveness of Erie as a city, the provision of things for recreation, joy and satisfaction. He said it was important that these two things should be kept in some happy relationship and combination, and that it reminded him of a Scotchman at home - he is himself a Scotchman - who had a way of mixing his drinks. He used to take half whiskey and half beer. They asked him why he mixed those drinks. He said he had found that if he took whiskey alone he got drunk before he was full, and that if he took beer alone he got full before he was drunk.

I think perhaps this luncheon will give us an opportunity to strike a happy balance in our program. It will perhaps afford us an opportunity to touch upon different points in a way in which they would not be touched upon in the formal series of prepared discussions, bringing out points of especial value, incidental, spontaneous, vital things which each individual has learned from his own experience. In that sense they will be prepared, because they will be

things deep in our hearts, as the result of experience, and already to go off when the opportunity is given. This is the opportunity that we want to afford. The meeting is thrown open, and we would be glad to hear from any one, especially any one who has some definite achievement to report, some definite good way of doing things to suggest, or some definite bad way of doing things to avoid.

## City Planning in Smaller Cities

### A SUGGESTED CITY PLANNING PROGRAM

MR. E. C. HILL, City Plan Commission, Trenton, N. J.:

I have been very much interested in what has been told us about Cleveland, New York and Chicago, but I think · that some of the speakers forget that we have a thousand cities in these United States and that most of them are comparatively small. I think if out of this planning conference we could evolve some sort of plan that we could submit to the various municipalities, embodying recommendations, so that instead of having each city compelled to work out entirely its own plans a little basis might be furnished on which each one could work, whether it be a small municipality or a big one, it would be a great help to those cities that have timid Common Councils and Commissions. For instance, it seems to me that we could recommend that every city should appoint a city planning commission, somewhat like the German commissions, of which at least one half should represent the engineering activities of the city and the other half should be made up of taxpayers, preferably those who are wealthy, so that we might have both sides of the problems represented by individual members of the commission. Those boards on which the private citizenship is not represented do not always recognize the point of view of the ordinary private citizen, and those that are made up of private citizens do not have the knowledge that they should. We might also

be able to recommend as fundamental that city planning commissions should endeavor to obtain the waterfronts: that they should endeavor to secure control of the streams that run through the city; that they should endeavor to provide ample park spaces of a certain given proportion to the area of the city; that they should endeavor to connect those park spaces with a boulevard surrounding the city. Those are four fundamental recommendations that we might make, that would furnish a basis for almost all city planning commissions and would not frighten them. There are many small cities that are just as anxious as large cities to be pointed to with pride, but they cannot spend the money that New York, Cleveland or Chicago can, and I think a recommendation of this conference outlining something that could be done without great expense would be hailed with a great deal of pleasure by them.

THE SITUATION IN BRIDGEPORT, CONN.

MR. C. D. Davis, Business Men's Association, Bridgeport, Conn.:

One thought that impressed me as I attended this morning's meeting of the Conference and heard the talk before, at and after the formal session was that if this city planning movement keeps on there will be only three or four cities -New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago - fit to live in, unless some of the small towns and cities wake up. How are we to start city planning in the smaller cities? We in Bridgeport number 100,000 and we have not got a plan of any sort. We have a common council that now and then raises the salaries of the firemen, or something of that sort, that costs us \$23,000 a year and profits us nothing. We have grown so fast that we have not a schoolhouse big enough to house the high school children and are obliged to hold a double session, afternoon as well as morning. Talk about condemnation! They tried to take a plot of ground next to one already bought, and the

owner said, "You cannot get that for a schoolhouse in five years; I can keep you out of it." What can you do in a case like that? We have to go to the State of Connecticut for every thing we want to do. We have no freedom whatever. That may be the fault of the city charter, but the present generation is not altogether responsible for that. The city of Bridgeport, as far as the business men are concerned, would like to see something done; but we have an impression that the city administrators are largely a sort of grafters. I don't know that you can put your hand on any one man and say that he is engaged in real graft; but they waste the money. We went to Hartford to get a commission appointed, and they laughed at us. We went up there to get some amendments to our charter, and they laughed at us. The politicians were against us.

We must have more freedom in the city to go ahead and try experiments; and if there are any towns of 100,000 population represented here, towns with intelligent plans, personally I should like to hear from them.

### CITY PLANNING IN CALGARY, ALBERTA

Mr. G. W. Lemon, Secretary City Planning Commission:
Calgary is one of those cities with less than 100,000 population where city planning has been started. Five months ago we formed a planning commission of thirty-five members, appointed by the mayor. On this commission were both commissioners — we have a commission form of government — the city engineer, the city clerk and other city officials, besides a number of citizens. We made an attempt at the very first to work in harmony with the city officials. The work of the commission was divided into several parts, which describe themselves, — such as sanitation and housing, streets and improvements, sewers, buildings, parks and boulevards, drafting legislation, traffic and transportation, and education.

I will briefly sum up the efforts of five months. We

have pending before the legislature an amendment whereby we will have the power to go in and clean up vacant lots of absentee owners, on the same principle that a city goes in and clears the snow away and charges it up against general taxation. Then we had a notion, which I suppose is rather a peculiar one, that bill boards are rather inartistic, and we started after the bill boards. Of course, we met with opposition; of course, we were told that our plan was unconstitutional, and that the whole power of the United States and Europe would be brought to bear on our little city if we should undertake to put such an ordinance into effect.

We expect to have the building code amended soon, for the reason that we have succeeded in getting a fire chief who is immensely popular, a new medical inspector, a health officer, together with one of the city physicians, to help make proposed amendments covering the regulation of the height of buildings, distance from the street, restrictions as to residential property, and so forth.

We found that there was some need for an ornamental lighting system, and the commission, through its secretary, wrote to various cities all over the continent and got suggestions. From all those suggestions we have worked out a plan for the ornamental lighting of Calgary, and that plan has been adopted.

The educational committee secured the services of Mr. Mawson, the English landscape architect, from Liverpool University. He came and delivered a lecture, and we have arranged to have 500 copies sent through Alberta free, just doing a little missionary work among the smaller places in Alberta in the way of town planning.

Our parks and boulevards committee has been considering the turning of vacant lots into playgrounds. We now have a committee making a survey of the whole city, section by section, and this with a view to securing from the owners of vacant lots permission to use them as temporary playgrounds. We find so far, although the thing

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has not been fully developed, that the owners are not reluctant to give the use of their vacant lots, provided they can be built upon if necessary. Of course, they are only temporary playgrounds, but it may be two or three years before they will be built upon in certain sections of the city.

The sanitation committee is asking for an amendment to the tenement house law which will allow us to go in and correct certain abuses in housing which our present laws will not allow.

Last, but not least, Calgary is to have a civic center. You may raise your eyes and think that is a little ambitious for a city of 55,000 people; although the population is 55,000 today, in five years from now we expect 100,000, and in ten years a good many more than that. We really do not know our population until after the last train The announcement that the Dominion government intends to spend within the next three years in Calgary \$2,000,000 in the erection of an immigration hall and a custom house, brought us to the point where we thought the psychological moment had arrived for a civic center. We invited all citizens who had any interest in the matter to come to a public meeting. Then we wrote to twenty experts with a view to securing a plan, and the replies will be read at a second public meeting soon to be held. We do not expect to have all these buildings go up in a night, but we plan to have in the next five or six years the nucleus of a civic center.

### THE CHAIRMAN:

It is quite evident that we shall have to change the map or Calgary will change it for us, because they are evidently making city planning history there with these constructive, creative plans. I think such work shows the importance of the adoption of better planning methods for small cities. While the cities are still small, there is an opportunity to do something, because of the flexibility

and elasticity of conditions and the low value of real estate.

Stanley Hall, the president of Clark University, has said that when he was a boy there was a theory among the boys that young turtles contained all sorts of meat, that there was one kind of meat in the body, other kinds in the different parts, but that an old turtle was simply turtle. With cities that is true. Potentially there are all sorts of possibilities in a small city that can be easily drawn out, but it seems that the old cities are mostly turtle.

MR. RICHARD B. WATROUS, Secretary American Civic Association, Washington, D. C.:

We are fortunate in having present with us in this Conference the energetic secretary from Calgary, so that he can tell us about the planning of the new city. Most of us in the East are not planners but re-planners, but in that great country to the northwest they are taking up with more zeal than any of us can the general subject of making cities from the foundation up. It has been my good fortune to be in more or less personal communication with Mr. Lemon. I believe when I first got in touch with him, about a couple of months ago, the city had 40,000. It has 55,000 now. There is another city in Alberta, Edmonton by name, that is working out a plan which has some most enthusiastic and intelligent advocates, one of whom, an architect, has spent the entire winter in Europe studying the situation there.

What is true of Alberta is also true of other new sections—if they may still be called new—of our own country. I refer particularly to that great state of Texas, which is setting up some splendid examples for the making of a new city. Dallas, which is not very new, has within the last three years had a commission. 'It has printed within the last three months a most elaborate planning report; and, best of all, the recommendation of the expert has been taken up and is being pushed through with vigor. That

is not a report that is going into a pigeon hole. And so the story comes to us from time to time of new, small cities in new, virgin country that have got from the East the experience that is being disseminated by these conferences.

What can be said of the great western country is also true of the South, which is very much interested. We are going to have a chance to show to our own people and to the people from abroad cities that have been made by people who have given thought in advance to their making.

# City Planning in Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Woodruff Lemming, President of the Brooklyn Chapter of American Institute Architects:

A committee of Brooklyn citizens started the idea of getting up a city plan commission and putting the borough president on it, but before the commission was entirely formed the word went out that the borough president had joined with the four other borough presidents of Greater New York in a city planning committee of their own. Such is the rapid rate of city planning progress in Greater New York.

We have a unique plan in old Brooklyn, because there used to be a horse ferry there. I can remember my grand-mother telling me how she sat on the banks of the East River and waited for the horse ferry to come over, because she would n't trust herself to the steam ferry. The roads radiated from the point where the horse ferry landed to the other parts of the city. When Brooklyn Bridge was erected it came over almost to the same point where the old horse ferry landed. Therefore we have in Brooklyn today practically a radial plan, and other parts of Long Island which had a horse ferry like Brooklyn's have to a certain extent the same radial plan.

At the very beginning of our work we found that if we wished to form a plan for Brooklyn that plan must

take into consideration the whole of Long Island, so rapidly is Brooklyn growing and overlapping neighboring towns, and bring the various Long Island communities into correlation. Of course the great trouble in Brooklyn is to raise the money. Our committee has for some time been considering how best to present the matter to the city from the financial point of view, and this morning's session has given me some thunderbolts for my own use.

# City Planning in Philadelphia

Mr. W. F. Gleason, Secretary of the Philadelphia Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Since your last session, in Philadelphia, in June of last year, an ordinance was passed creating a Committee on Comprehensive Planning. That committee was composed entirely of citizens, with little representation on the engineering side. After its appointment and before it was actually able to begin the work, the campaign for the election of another mayor arrived, and during the political discussion city planning was lost sight of. With the inauguration of the new mayor the work that Mayor Reyburn had so well started was again taken up, and we now have a commission composed of ten citizens — large taxpavers and seven members ex officio, including the mayor, president of the common council, president of the select council and the chairman of the finance committee. The engineering staff is represented by the chief of the Bureau of Surveys, the Director of the Department of Public Works and, in addition, one of the ten appointed members is the Director of the Board of Docks and Wharves, in charge of the improvement of the river front, and he has an engineering staff working under him. We have, therefore, a system that guarantees the cooperation of engineers and citizens. The citizens on the committee include two architects of recognized standing, a doctor, a lawyer, two large manufacturers, and one of the largest and most important

financiers in the city connected with the street transportation interests, our vital problem at present. Their first meeting was held in April and they have had two meetings since organization, one in April and one in May. that time they have appointed sub-committees on rapid transit, on the limitation of the height, character and use of buildings, on publicity and lectures, on river and harbor improvements, on housing and sanitation, and so on. The committees are actively at work, and although we have not published any report I have no doubt before the next national conference is held, Philadelphia will give a full account of herself and show decidedly important results. One of our first achievements was to get \$50,000 appropriated by the Council for the appointment of a corps of engineers and experts and assistants, to work out a comprehensive study. That money is available now. appointments will shortly be made, and Philadelphia is going to study the problem in a careful manner.

## Metropolitan Planning in Philadelphia

Mrs. Rollin Norris, Representing Main Line Housing Association, Philadelphia:

We are planning to have in Philadelphia next fall a comprehensive planning conference of all the townships within a radius of twenty-five miles of Philadelphia. We felt that the townships ought to have an opportunity to show their interest in comprehensive town planning, and we asked our township commissioners to coöperate with our main line housing association in sending out a letter asking the townships near us to confer in regard to the need of comprehensive township planning. The result was that we brought together the township officials from several of the townships and boroughs near us on the main line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and delegates from the civic organizations. At that meeting a resolution was adopted to the effect that our main line housing association should

send out an invitation to all townships and civic associations for a conference next fall. Since I have come to Boston I have realized more and more the importance of what we are doing, and hope that our movement will be a means of carrying out what some of the towns outside of Boston have done.

#### THE CHAIRMAN:

The general question of planning for a development metropolitan in character and under metropolitan auspices, representing a number of independent towns and cities, is and will continue to be of increasing importance. So far as I know, the action of townships outside of Philadelphia is the first action of the kind taken, unless you consider the county action in Essex County, New Jersey, of that character. In that case they organized simply for park and playground development.

# Mr. B. A. HALDEMAN, Philadelphia:

In the several years we have been actively engaged in Philadelphia in preparing plans for things that should be done in the future, we have all felt the work should extend far beyond the confines of the city proper, and we have been fortunate in awaking a spirit of cooperation on the part of sections adjacent to the city. We have found a particular interest along the main line, among suburban towns near Philadelphia. Housing conditions of the population in these suburban towns have provoked a great deal of discussion. It has been generally supposed that unfortunate conditions of living, such as are known in some of our large cities, were confined to the cities, but they have also grown up in the suburbs. The situation has been very thoroughly gone into, and it has been decided that the only way in which those unfortunate conditions can be successfully eliminated is by the different communities cooperating with each other, in order that they may not only cure the conditions that exist today, but establish such

regulations that it will be impossible for such conditions to be created in the future anywhere within the suburban areas of Philadelphia. To that end it will be necessary to enact certain laws that will give the suburbs the right to control the use and occupancy of land, to some extent at least.

I think that that really is one of the most important things that this conference has to consider, to determine just what kind of laws we want in order to carry out this work.

## City Planning in Ottawa, Canada

Hon. Charles Hopewell, Mayor of Ottawa:

The people of the capital of the Dominion of Canada are keenly alive to anything that bears on the improvement and development of their city.

With regard, for instance, to charging the whole cost of local improvements against the property benefited we are free to do that in the city of Ottawa. We deal with every street opening, every local improvement, upon its own merits. In some cases the total cost of the improvement is paid out of the general fund, in some cases fifty per cent and in some cases seventy-five per cent is so paid, and in other cases the total cost is paid by the property benefited, without a cent being taken out of the general fund. We go on the principle that some local improvements benefit the city as a whole to a greater extent than others, and also that the opening of any street through a congested district is a benefit to a city as a whole in that it gives more fresh air and sunlight to the inhabitants. I venture to suggest that the question of raising money for improvements is largely a question of education. I notice that human nature as I see it exhibited at this Conference is about the same as it is across the line. In any municipality you will find a certain class of people anxious to have certain improvements made if someone else will pay for them, but if they are asked to pay for them all sorts of objections will be raised.

I have been preaching a city planning doctrine for some years in our country, that local municipalities should be given by the state or province an unlimited amount, almost, of home rule; that is to say, that a local municipality, with proper safeguards in the way of taxation, should be given the power to do its own business and to solve its own problems in its own way. I am one of those who believe in trusting the people, who know the conditions, to solve the local problems.

On behalf of myself and on behalf of the other Canadians present at this Conference, I thank you, our American cousins, for the cordial reception we have had here. We shall carry back to our homes not only suggestions that we hope to put into practice, which we think will bear fruit abundantly, but we shall carry back this thought impressed upon our hearts, that we are all of one blood, that we are one people, after all.

# Procedure in Condemning Land for Public Use

FRANK B. WILLIAMS, Esq., New York City:

One of the great troubles in carrying on city planning arises from the waste incident to our expensive methods of taking property for public use. The procedure for condemnation, for instance, is made needlessly complicated and expensive. The rights of property owners would be adequately safeguarded by simplifying the present cumbersome machinery. If a simpler method were adopted I think a great part of the difficulty in acquiring and would be obviated. We should consider the necessity of a reform in procedure, and aim at uniformity in all the states of the Union.

FLAVEL SHURTLEFF, Esq., Secretary of the Conference:

So long as the difficulty that Mr. Williams has just presented exists, there will be a permanent obstacle to the execution of city planning. Land ownership in the munici-

pality is essential, and the acquisition of land in the great majority of cases means the starting of condemnation proceedings. It does not seem necessary to protect individual rights to the extent of keeping the city out of desired land from two to five years, and yet this delay is not exceptional in cases where condemnation procedure has to be invoked.

Let me cite as one cause, and the chief cause, of the delay and expense in condemnation procedure the right of appeal to a common law jury. It is a rule to which I am glad to say there are some notable exceptions, that a jury in condemnation cases will find a verdict against the city, and both materially increase the award of damages to property owners and materially decrease the betterment assessment, if it allows any betterment assessment at all. The result is that cities do not take chances with juries but make settlements with owners on a basis outrageously in excess of the fair market value of the land. The effectiveness of the condemnation procedure which eliminates the jury is evidenced in several commonwealths. I am thinking particularly of Indiana. I am told by the Indianapolis Park Commissioners that in acquiring land for a park system, work which has been going on for about three years, there have been only three appeals from the awards of the park commissioners. It would be difficult to convince the Boston Street Commissioners of the truth of this statement, and I feel sure that had there been a right of appeal to a jury in Indianapolis, the park commissioners' awards would not have been so generally assented to.

But you say "there is a constitutional provision that makes a jury necessary." You will be surprised to know, perhaps, that many commonwealths have a jury in condemnation cases only because other commonwealths have a jury. Under the common law, a jury hearing in land damage cases was not a right of the private owner, and the common law still obtains, except where it is modified by constitution or statute. Some states that have let the

common law alone are enjoying condemnation procedure without the intervention of a jury; other states have given land owners the right of appeal to jury by statute, and in still others the right is a constitutional one. It will be an extremely difficult matter because of the opposition of landed interests, either to overturn statutes or amend constitutions, but if the city is to acquire land in a reasonable time at reasonable cost, we must secure a more competent tribunal to determine awards of damages and assessments for benefit.

## The Coördination of Municipal Effort

## THE CHAIRMAN:

One of the most encouraging things in city planning is the increasing recognition of the need for coordination of the work. It has been heretofore going on more or less piecemeal, and it should be brought together for the greatest effectiveness. In considering the problem, for instance, of meeting the cost of city planning, we should not lose sight of the direct and indirect effects that assessments may have upon the different features of city planning. To my mind one of the strongest arguments that can be made in support of assessments for benefit is that it furnishes, on the one hand, a stimulus to the city to plan ahead properly, and, on the other hand, it furnishes a check and restraint upon planning because there is aroused the interest of adjacent property owners, who must pay the bills. Indirectly by a better system of finance we have one of the most powerful influences for a better system of planning.

# Mr. L. L. Tribus, Consulting Engineer of the Borough of Richmond, New York:

It will be a matter of interest to those present, following the topic of coöperation between city officials and city departments, to know that at a recent meeting of New

York's central ruling body, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, a resolution was passed prohibiting the acquisition of property or the erection of a public building on property already owned by the city until the President of the Borough in which the property belonged had full opportunity to report upon the matter and advise the Board of Estimate and Apportionment as to whether there would be interference with any existing or contemplated plan for general civic betterment. The resolution also forbade department heads from presenting their requests to the Board of Estimate and Apportionment until they had first held a conference with the respective Borough Presidents as to the possibility or probability of such interference, the whole being aimed at securing proper cooperation between otherwise independent authorities, so that the appearance, at least, of portions of the city in interest could be developed along intelligent and harmonious lines. New York has grown so rapidly in population that its energies have been largely devoted to trying to provide transportation, with but comparatively little effort towards the artistic or beautiful or even convenient city. Recently, however, public sentiment is demanding intelligent thought and careful planning, so that the city of the future shall not only be habitable, but impressive and artistic.

## City Planning and Housing

MR. ELMER S. FORBES, Boston:

My interest has been more especially in the direction of providing better housing for people in some of the unplanned cities, but this subject has a very vital connection with city planning. A large part of the trouble comes from improperly laid out towns. With streets properly planned and with building lots of suitable depth most of the housing problem would disappear. The difficulty may perhaps be taken care of with comparative ease in newly laid out towns or in extensions of older towns which may

be laid out at the present time and in the future. Our difficulty with the housing problem is in trying to get proper housing in the old town. I don't know that that concerns this gathering so much as some other questions.

I have been greatly interested in what has been said with reference to the ability of towns and cities to develop in their own way. At present we here in Massachusetts have been compelled to go to the legislature, as has been the case in other states, for everything that we wanted to do. We have recently passed in the General Court a bill, which has been signed by the Governor, permitting towns and cities to pass by-laws and ordinances respecting fire protection, public health and public morals, and we believe that through the agency of this law it is going to be possible for towns and cities, if they choose, gradually to improve conditions.

There is also a tenement house bill which has passed both houses of the General Court and is now in the hands of the Governor. It is not a mandatory bill at all, but an enabling act which will permit towns, if the Governor sees fit to sign it, to provide themselves with a housing law which will shut out bad housing in the future absolutely, and we are waiting with bated breath to see what his Excellency will do in the matter. With these two bills we shall be in a position to do something as we wish to do it; and then, of course, must come that campaign of education, because without education it will be impossible to secure the benefits of these bills. The trouble in the past has been that too many people have thought, as was recently expressed in a town meeting, that a man ought to be allowed to build anything he likes, at any time and anywhere. That disposition must be overcome, and it can only be overcome by education.

## THE PROBLEM OF THE BLIGHTED DISTRICT

MR. J. RANDOLPH COOLIDGE, JR.
Fellow American Institute of Architects, Boston

SINCE you are to have a disappointment in my address, you had better have the measure of it now. I am not going to point out any blighted districts in Boston or in New York, though they exist, nor in Philadelphia, nor anywhere else. I am not going to show you any lantern slides to illustrate what a blighted district is. I am going to address you as people who know what my definition of a blighted district applies to, each of you in your own city or town.

My discussion of the subject will be entirely theoretical. I am not aiming at any district anywhere. Nevertheless. if apology is needed for presenting this subject in a somewhat technical way, I will justify myself by saying that the Metropolitan Plan Commission appointed last June by the Governor of Massachusetts, that labored and died early in January, asked certain questions of the people to whom it looked for help here in Boston. We had three sets of questions, - one addressed to our friends abroad; the second intended for Americans outside of Boston; the third set just for ourselves. Among those questions was this: "Think of any region in the metropolitan district in which values are stationary or falling. Is there any action that you can suggest to rehabilitate this district and put it on the up-grade?" The answers to that question - which, I repeat, was advanced only to persons in Boston — indicated that, in their minds, at least, there were some districts to which the question applied; but

the remedies suggested were few and far between. It is to direct your attention as city planners to this problem of the blighted districts that I will ask you to suffer for a few minutes this evening, while I consider the problem of the blighted district.

What is a blighted district and what has it to do with the subject of city planning? A blighted district is one in which land values after a period of increase are stationary or falling. (I am not talking of any social blight whatever; this is an economic question, as I view it.) Its relation to city planning is that it represents the absence or the failure of planning and cries out for meliorative treatment under penalty of discrediting city planning for any but undeveloped areas.

Now city planning has few functions more important than the conservation and restoration of impaired land values. When a district goes through the successive transformations from rural to suburban and urban, residential, small retail business, wholesale business, storage, industrial uses, offices and large retail, there is an alteration or renewal of the buildings at each stage of the movement and a partial sacrifice of values that is more than made up (in most cases) by the increase in the value of the sites. Thus, in Metropolitan Boston today,

Land in the open country may be worth	\$5.00-\$500.00 per acre.
Suburban residential	.02- 2.00 per sq. ft.
Urban residential	1.00- 10.00 per sq. ft.
Small retail business	5.00- 25.00 per sq. ft.
Wholesale business (& storage)	10.00- 50.00 per sq. ft.
Industrial uses	.05- 5.00 per sq. ft.
Offices and large retail business	20.00- 250.00 per sq. ft.
New buildings (permanent) may range in cost	2.50- 100.00 per sq. ft.

It is plain that wherever the increase in value of the land more than offsets the depreciation on the buildings, there is no economic loss. In Metropolitan areas by far the greater part of the land is rising in value, and valuation tends to increase faster than population, for, owing to the fall in the value of gold and other causes, prices tend

upward. Moreover, the upward movement of prices keeps real estate improvements from showing the whole of the shrinkage in value that is inseparable from increasing age. If a building that cost \$100,000 thirty years ago could not be replaced today for less than \$130,000, it may have an earning capacity greater than belongs to its theoretical value obtained by charging off thirty years' depreciation from its first cost. It is somewhat fortunate that a part of the value of old buildings is thus conserved, for when a particular piece of land attains its fullest earning capacity, that capacity gradually tends downward, because of the waning advantages of the buildings as they grow older.

Here then is a frequent cause of economic blight. district once rural has become suburban through extension of a street railway with horse cars (curious old-fashioned word), the horse cars have been replaced by electrics, the running time shortened one-half and the service doubled. The suburban detached houses, each in its own garden, give place to continuous blocks of dwellings, or detached apartment houses. The street frontage is practically built up and the back of the lots, although open, is decidedly unattractive. If this district is transformed from suburban to urban within a few years, the later buildings are not likely to be more attractive or valuable (per square foot) than the earlier invaders. This means that the development attains definite proportions within a comparatively short time and then stops. The land is fully covered with buildings, and the buildings are in competition with still newer buildings on cheaper land a little further out of town. If now a subway or an elevated railway affords rapid transit to outlying unimproved sections and brings them within twenty to forty-five minutes' run from the down town centers, the competition of attractive low-priced building sites not more remote from the center than the older sections were when they were first built up is liable to bring the growth of these older sections to a standstill,

and their buildings showing signs of age, perhaps of neglect, enter upon a stage of declining value that may be called blight. The more hastily and cheaply a district has been built up, the sooner its symptoms of structural decay become acute. One single neglected wooden building among scores gives an impression of decline that repels possible tenants of adjoining property. A decline in rents, together with persistent overvaluation of properties, most of which are virtually for sale, intensifies the difficulties of the owners who begin to neglect the upkeep (especially the painting and plumbing) of their buildings or require the tenants to make the repairs which then invariably are insufficient for proper maintenance. In such a district business cannot thrive, good new housing cannot be provided except by destruction of buildings less good, but not without value: these older buildings become ever more forlorn and a permanent blighting is established until some new impulse from outside transforms and recreates the district.

In cases that will readily come to mind the discontinuance of some large industry may leave a district with empty factory buildings, and a supply of cheap dwellings far beyond the immediate demand.

In still other cases a residential section once attractive is blighted by the permanent disfigurement of its main thoroughfares through the construction of an elevated railway, or as a result of the depreciation of some section intervening between it and the center of the city through bad pavements, unkempt or disorderly streets (and houses), an increase in the number of saloons, a development of slum conditions. There is unfortunately no legal compensation for the damage done to a quiet self-respecting neighborhood through the depreciation of the main traffic streets that connect it with the down town center. Even the owners of property abutting upon a line of elevated railway are fortunate compared with those whose premises border upon side streets in the same region. The latter have no claim to compensation from the uproarious intruder whose

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coming has beset them with turmoil whenever they leave or draw near to their homes; too often with the added injury of reduced service on the surface car lines.

Now the remedies for a blighted district are more easily suggested than applied. So long as a district is not really but only apparently blighted, its present buildings unremunerative but its land values maintained or rising by reason of good prospects, no remedy is needed and the initiative of property owners can be safely counted upon; but when the general mass of real estate transactions in a district shows an unmistakable decline in values, the fact should be recognized by assessors and revaluations made accordingly. It is worse than useless to try to maintain a fictitious appearance by valuations which the earning capacity of property does not warrant. Inadequate returns on capital are not helped by high taxes. The taxes should be lowered even though the city's general rate of taxation has to be raised and the loss upon the blighted district must be made good by more favored sections. Not only must the city expect to receive less, but also to expend more in a district that has seen better days.

There is no such thing as a hopeless district, and the less of decline there may be even in the worst spots, the easier it will be to give values a general upward tendency by the right expedients of city planning. Suppose that a main thoroughfare that formerly served the traffic needs of a residential district has become overcrowded in course of time with traffic unrelated to that district, or suppose such a thoroughfare to be given over to street railways, including an elevated structure, some new means of access exempt from the drawbacks of the older highway is greatly to be desired, a new parallel street for instance with asphalt pavement free from car tracks. Failing this — which is a costly expedient, to be sure - the existing main thoroughfare may be widened or repaved or designated as a one-way street, but the effect upon the district is neither so beneficial nor so lasting. Independently of any improvement in ap-

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proaches a blighted area can be redeemed by judicious improvements at public expense, as by planting of trees and shrubbery in certain streets, re-surfacing others, erecting well-designed public buildings on well-chosen sites. schoolhouses, police and fire stations, public baths, gymnasia and markets, by creating or improving open spaces, squares, playgrounds and small parks, - and by establishing civic centers with popular lectures and concerts. All that public authority can lawfully do to make life more agreeable in such districts should be done, rather than in those that pay a larger share of the taxes or attract an increasing population, for the mere increase in population is a sign usually of industrial prosperity and good demand for labor. Indeed the evil of congestion, which is the very opposite of the depletion we are now dealing with, is caused by the rush of new industries to a well-assured labor market and by the tide of new population (largely foreign) attracted by the new industries. Since there is so marked a tendency in certain manufactures, like that of clothing or confectionery, to pre-empt high-priced land in sections of the city already built up with tenements and shops, it is likely that the introduction of such industries into sections hitherto free from them will be accompanied by an increase in population and of land values, and the housing will tend to change in character from separate dwellings to crowded tenements. How far a sound public policy will justify the introducing of new industries under exemption from taxation for a certain number of years is a debatable question, but it is easier to justify such exemption when applied to the conserving of existing values threatened with depletion than to advocate it as a means of creating non-existing value. Self-preservation is Nature's law. This plea may also commend the practice of municipal housing which, however successful in England and Germany, is looked on askance in this country as an unwarranted invasion of the field of private enterprise. There is no criticism of the municipality that establishes schools, hospi-

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tals and asylums in competition with private institutions, nor are we averse to municipal water supply and lighting and power plants. As yet, however, we hesitate as to municipal traction systems and denounce municipal housing as paternalism. Nevertheless the one remedy approved by actual experience in dealing with intolerable congestion of population is municipal expropriation and model housing; and this is a remedy that can be advised on economic and social grounds to apply to a district in decline.<sup>1</sup>

No city is well administered unless the whole of it is well administered. Where private capital halts and dreads the risk and feels no responsibility for future conditions, public credit must be applied, and declining values social and economic, must be supported until they can stand alone, for a city, unlike a business enterprise, cannot liquidate, it cannot discard its unprofitable lines, it must grow, it must change, but it must not depreciate.

#### DISCUSSION

Mr. F. L. OLMSTED, Brookline, Mass .:

As Mr. Coolidge has been delivering his paper I have been wondering at the probable reaction of various members of this conference on that paper, and wondering somewhat as to my own reaction.

I think there are probably a good many members of the conference who will, without defining it very clearly in their own minds, rather start back from the idea expressed by Mr. Coolidge that it is the business of the community, the business of the city, to support land values. I want to point out the connection between that idea and what

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<sup>1 &</sup>quot;If American cities have nothing to learn from other countries in regard to bad housing, they have nothing to teach in the way of reform. They are following Europe slowly and a long distance behind. There is no serious attempt to deal with insanitary areas, as they have been dealt with in England, or to prevent the creation of new ones by regulation and planning of extensions as in Germany or to promote the provision of superior houses by organized public effort as in several countries."—ARTHUR SHADWELL in Encyc. Brit., Housing.

might be regarded as the reverse statement of it, which was discussed this morning. It might be said that if, as we all seemed to agree this morning, the city has a right to collect and should collect the value which the action of the city in making and carrying out its city plans gives to private property, the reverse of that, as suggested by Mr. Coolidge, is perhaps in fairness also true, — that when the action of the city has depreciated property, through improper or unwise planning or through the mere accidents of planning which on the whole is good, the city should stand behind that loss in some way, not by paying damages, but by striving to make good the depreciation which has come about from the action or non-action, the fault of the city, as regards that district. Are not those two ideas, in fairness, more or less complementary, one to the other? I simply inject that idea into the discussion.

## HON. LAWSON PURDY, New York City:

I have very seldom heard so philosophical and comprehensive a paper as that of Mr. Coolidge. Being in an assessing department, it holds me with very great force, because when values decline or are stationary the owners of such property make life especially miserable to the assessors. They ought to do it. It is the function of an assessing department to keep pace with vanishing and declining values so that those so unfortunate as to own declining or stationary property shall not bear an undue burden. But an assessing department must always, from the nature of things, follow the evidence. Consequently they are always somewhat under the rising values and they are somewhat above the falling values. All the more need, then, for great industry on the part of an assessing department.

But I did not rise to speak of assessing departments. I have seen and you have seen certain sections of a city remain stationary or decline, and Mr. Coolidge has made certain philosophical generalizations as to certain things, as far as the responsibility of the city is concerned.

It comes home to me, thinking of my own city of New York, how certain territory has remained stationary or has declined which was once on the up-grade, and that that fact is evidenced there and evidenced everywhere that the city has been at fault. The advance of land value measures the economic utility of the site that advances, and if a city advances in value in a normal way, along lines of main thoroughfares, advances radially from the center, it ought never to go back, for the land nearest the center ought always to be put to a higher economic use than the land farther from the center. If that is not the case, it is the fault of the city authorities. We have been confronted in the city of New York for some years with declining values along our best known street, Broadway. From Broadway west to the Hudson River, there is a large territory, part of which was once occupied by people of moderate means living in their own and hired houses, one family to a house, part of which was inhabited by people who owned their own dwellings of larger size or who hired at large Those dwelling houses remain to this day in large numbers, but instead of housing a single family they house three, four or more families. Their glory has passed and the aggregate rental is less. They are not suited for the uses to which that part of the land in the city of New York should be put.

I do not know entirely why that condition exists. I think I know one reason, and the main reason, and it is that that development of the land west of Broadway on Manhattan Island was unplanned. There were no thoroughfares running to and from the financial section of Manhattan, and there are not to this day. There is one good street, Hudson Street, and a certain line of commercial activity has been pushing northward along Hudson Street to the enhancement of values on that street. But all the way between Hudson Street and Broadway there has been stagnation, and on Broadway there has been a decline. The decline on Broadway, I think, has been partly due

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to the character of the ownership, the lack of ability and foresight of the owners. Buildings on Broadway today are very largely what they were thirty, forty and fifty years ago — good buildings in one sense, that will last fifty years yet and maybe one hundred, if cared for, but lacking the modern advantages. North of that, where the land was not owned by estates which did not spend the money to improve, but owned by persons capable of improving, property has been improved in accordance with modern conditions, and tenants from the old section have been taken into modern buildings, fire proof, with a sprinkler system, elevators, up to date in every way.

I have only hinted at the causes. I do not know them all. I can see certain things that happen. But I think it is clear at least that the city has not done its part by means of through streets of adequate size to develop that territory in a way that would have been best for the economic advantage of the city of New York. Again, I want to come back to the point that impressed me so much in Mr. Coolidge's paper. The value of land is the test of economic advantage to the city of every square foot of soil, and when land farther away from the center rises to a higher point in value, while land near the center remains stationary or goes backward, there is something wrong. That something wrong must be due to some lack of foresight or lack of ability on the part of the city government.

## DR. DANA W. BARTLETT, Los Angeles:

The speaker who said that no city was well administered that was not well administered in every part, it seems to me, struck the keynote. No city can be half good and half bad. The first thing to do in connection with city planning, in dealing with the question of blighted areas, is to find out the cause. If it is through deterioration in the character of the region, as has perhaps been suggested, the coming in of bad life in any respect, that is, of course, a matter for social study and for scientific examination,

to see if we cannot find a way in which the moral life of that neighborhood may be elevated, and in that way elevate the values of the land.

I have in mind in our town an effort that is being made to put the civic center and the new Union Station in what is called the blighted neighborhood. It seems to most of us that that would be a thing well done, because it happens also to be the historic center of the city. Then in our town we have a movement for a garden city. Mr. Olmsted is at work upon plans looking to a great industrial city that will be free from all the evils of the old life of the city. When the people move to Mr. Olmsted's new village from that region where the factories now exist, shall that region simply be left, or may it not become a study on the part of those who are planning the city how that particular region can be improved? Shall it fill up with shacks? Shall the poorer class of people be allowed there, or shall everything possible be done to elevate the people, elevate their ideals, possibly by putting in a playground or a small park, or running a boulevard through that region, something that will add to the value of the whole city? point that the speaker has made, it seems to me, is good, that the whole city is the thing that we are working on. We cannot beautify a city simply with a beautiful string of boulevards and parks, or even our garden city, but we must work until every part is up to the ideal.

## FRANK B. WILLIAMS, Esq., New York City:

In listening with interest and pleasure to Mr. Coolidge's paper I was also thinking of the reason which the city could have for trying to keep up land values in blighted districts, and an additional reason occurred to me — that a blighted district tends to become an unsanitary district, and where the blight goes far enough in time it may even tend to become a slum district. Here we have another reason, and a strong reason, why something should be done for such a district, whether it is blighted simply in the

way of land values or whether it has become blighted through becoming a slum district. In city planning in this country we have two great problems always before us. In the first place, what we should do? - and we all know that is a serious enough problem; and in the second place, whether under our legal system we can do it? As soon as health considerations can be urged in connection with this problem the courts allow us a free hand. The English Unsanitary Areas Act is an excellent example for us to follow, and we have precedents in this country, notably one here in Boston. The area here, it is true, was not a blighted one. It was an unsanitary one simply by reason of bad drainage and the Back Bay. It was condemned as a whole, and in the reclaimed district a new street system was laid out with great advantage to the city in every way, financial, economic and otherwise. So far as I can see there is every reason why unsanitary districts or districts blighted in any way should be condemned as a whole, replanned, and the land sold off so that the city can get all the economic and hygienic advantages. It is not a new field legally, it is not a new field practically. It is something we can do with freedom and success.

## MR. E. K. Morse, Pittsburgh, Pa.:

I am more than interested in the discussion this evening because of its relation to the question of housing, a subject which is giving us more anxiety in Pittsburgh, I think, than any other. There is every reason why it should do so, because there is no distress in the city of Pittsburgh equal to that which comes from the lack of good housing. I have been in the Whitechapel district of London when I felt very much like backing out, and I have been inside a year in places in Pittsburgh where I have felt like backing out — not for the same reason, not because it was especially dangerous as regards menace to life or limb, but because it was unwholesome, unhealthy and nerve-racking. We have there a population that is varying and changing continually.

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The recent strike in our coal mines meant an almost entirely new population. It is so in the mill districts. Every time there is a change of rates you have a partial or entire

shut-down, and the whole population changes.

This is but one of our city planning difficulties. The other is caused by Pittsburgh's peculiar topography. Why, we are just now spending \$800,000 in the laying out of squares and are asking the city government to condemn property in order that we may get some vacant lots. Most of our vacant ground is on edge. All the business of Pittsburgh is done on 210 acres — I am speaking of the financial district — between hills 700 feet high on one side and 400 feet high on the other. Such humps very effectually prevent growth. The residential part of the population is separated in just the same way. When you compare this condition to Boston and her level fields you see the enormous disadvantage that Pittsburgh has in solving the problem of city planning.

# MR. WALTER B. STEVENS, St. Louis, Mo.:

Blighted districts in our city are the concern of the city planning commission but recently appointed. Our first city planner was the founder of the city. He laid out a plaza on the river front and built back of it. He called it the "Place Publique," and he told the men about him when he laid out that plan that he was going to have one of the finest cities in America. That plaza remained there through three generations. Then came the Bostons, the American invasion, and when the city was organized, not quite 100 years ago, they were able to out-vote the French and elect a Boston mayor. One of the earliest things that that administration did was to sell this Place Publique that had been intended by the founder for the use of the people for all time. It was built over with commission houses and warehouses because it lay near the river landing. In those days river transportation was everything, and now our city plan commission has as its first problem to get

back the Place Publique. The growth around there has been arrested by the railroad. It is a blighted district all about, blighted because the river transportation has gone down. I presume that the total cost of the property will be at least a million dollars, which is nothing like its former value. Our commission has started with the idea of clearing away a string of blocks nearly three-quarters of a mile long on that river front, to get back what the founder intended to see there and what we lost through the "Bostons."

But there is another blighted district, which comes about through economic, not through social causes, that is giving us trouble. With rapid transit, through the electrification of the street railway systems, the people who lived in the best houses were, you might say, left stranded between the business center and Grand Avenue, a strip of two miles. Stone-front houses, some of them as fine as the best people in St. Louis could build, went down rapidly to about one fourth or perhaps one third of their original value. How to save this district from becoming a slum has been engaging the attention of our commission. We propose to condemn a strip from Boylston Street to Grand Avenue about 260 feet wide and lay this strip out in two border roadways of 60 feet and divide the remaining 140-foot center strip into sidewalks, trafficways, parkways and street car reservation. It will cost fifty per cent at least more than the assessed value, or about \$6,000,000, but only in this way can we save the great heart of St. Louis.

The city plan commission of St. Louis has come into existence not as a voluntary movement but by force of public demand. Our people have realized that something must be done to steady values, to restore the river front, a tract four blocks wide and ten or fifteen blocks long, and try to save the area which I have just described, which is now degenerating into a slum district. The commission is organized on what seem to be practical lines authorized by ordinance and provided with an appropriation which

for the coming year is as much as the commission asked for. The membership of the commission comprises among others, ex officio, the president of the council and the speaker of the House of Delegates. In that way we get immediate connection with the legislative branches of the government. Then there is the head of our tax department, the president of our board of public improvements, corresponding, with enlarged powers, to your city engineer and street commissioners, the park commissioner and the building commissioner, and there are nine citizens representing all elements in the community as nearly as possible and all parts of the city. These men are working as heartily and as earnestly as men having high ideals in the way of city planning might be expected to work. Out of such an organization we hope to get rapid and good results. We have all the papers in the city with us and following up the matter so closely that they are insisting that we shall have something beside plazas on paper. The situation looks hopeful; and yet when it comes to assessing six million dollars of benefits on people with property lying along both sides of this great park and trafficway in the heart of the city, the tug of war will come.

We hope to meet the cost of the great improvements which are contemplated by assessing it on the districts which are peculiarly benefited and by spreading the assessments over a series of years. This is the method that has worked perfectly in Kansas City. After recommendation from the park board, the city council decides whether the assessment shall be distributed over five, ten, fifteen or twenty years, its decision depending on the size and the extent of the improvement. In the ten years that this method has been in practical operation, the experience has been that from forty to sixty per cent of the property owners will take advantage of the installment plan. The rate of interest is six per cent on the deferred payments or installments, and when they come in default it becomes eight per cent. Then, when action is taken to enforce the

lien, as you would a tax, it becomes ten per cent; and then the owner has a year to pay up all delinquencies and have the thing cleared up before his property goes at a tax sale.

The Kansas City method has been thoroughly tested, and decisions of the supreme court have sustained the provisions of the charter which incorporate the assessment principle. Though we are in the same State of the Union, Kansas City has ten years' start of us in city planning achievement by its foresightedness in securing this advantageous legislation, which, being incorporated in its charter, applies only to that municipality.

Mr. Coolinge, closing the discussion in answer to a question by Mr. Kellaway:

I would say that we have the kind of congestion that I referred to in my paper, due to the increase in factories which require near at hand a supply of unskilled labor. The very increase of those factories reduced the available area for housing and increased the demand for labor and attracted more labor. We have moved in a vicious circle, and the only remedy that has been suggested which has promised any effectiveness is the very drastic one that has been used in London and other foreign cities, of expropriating a part of that densely populated area and colonizing the inhabitants in some other part of the city, then rebuilding with good houses for a smaller population under better conditions. That is so serious a problem that nobody has proposed it for Boston. I know of no other remedy, and the condition is increasingly bad.

# THE PUBLIC STREET SYSTEMS OF THE CITIES AND TOWNS ABOUT BOSTON IN RELATION TO PRIVATE STREET SCHEMES

MR. ARTHUR A. SHURTLEFF
Fellow American Society of Landscape Architects, Boston

HAD you the power to rebuild your cities of the West and the East, taking counsel of the past to make your future plans perfect, whom would you trust to rearrange your streets? Would you consult with the philanthropists and draughtsmen who devised the rigid gridirons of Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco, or would you turn for counsel to the farmers, traders, and shipbuilders who fashioned the meandering street system of the district about Boston? In other words, would you seek the advice of men lacking topographical sense, but industrious with the T square, dividers, and theodolite, or would you confer with men acute in perceptions of gradient and site, but lacking the most rudimentary knowledge of mapping and composition? Doubtless you would feel little inclined toward either of these groups of men, and yet the district about Boston owes to farmers, traders, and shipbuilders the best system of radial thoroughfares in America, and for the want of the coördinating faculty of the dullest philanthropist and the stupidest draughtsman, this district stands a strong chance of possessing the worst system of circumferential highways in the world. A brief review of the parts which have been played and which remain to be played near Boston by these two groups of apparently incompetent men may be of interest to students of city design.

Boston was founded by men whose life-long contact with shipping, lumbering, farming, and trade had taught them the strategies of town placing. These pioneers scanned the coast for weeks and finally settled here in Boston under the conviction, which we also hold, that a more perfect spot for human habitation and industry was not to be found. They saw the value of this protected incurved shore, and the three navigable streams which watered a gravelly country of moderate contour backed by an amphitheater of high rock hills. At the focus of this natural composition where the harbor shore was deepest, they built their houses and wharves. A brisk inland trade springing up from this young community quickly brought about the formation of a system of radiating trails leading to Plymouth, Hartford, Northampton, Ticonderoga, Haverhill, and Quebec. These primitive thoroughfares were laid out as direct as possible, but with careful, even sensitive, regard for the contour of the hills and river valleys to secure gradients moderate enough for heavy pack trains and clumsy vehicles. The endurance of man and beast covering a period of many generations tested and fixed the line and grade of these primordial radials in a manner which we cannot but admire today. Our own knowledge of highway location has nothing to offer to improve the work of these early toilers, except in so far as our use of machinery enables us to overcome obstacles which they avoided. The principles which they practised are the principles which we have learned to use. Those were ideal times for the growth of convenient through roads when men had only to struggle against natural difficulties, and before the more serious barriers of land title and building obstruction had come into existence. Man-made obstacles have become more compelling in our own time, until difficulties of topography are reckoned as of little consequence compared with conflicts with land and buildings.

The system of roads which were derived in this scientific

though rustic manner, and which were extended and improved during the last two centuries by the various way

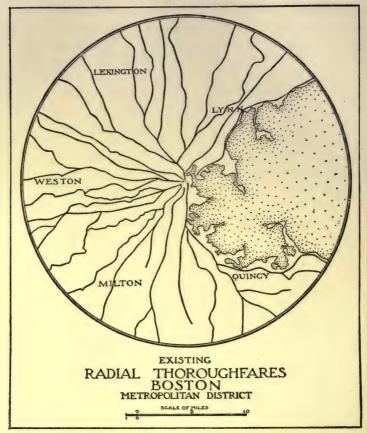


FIGURE 1.

This map shows upon a small scale the existing radial through roads of the district. The distribution of the roads forming this system of main highways is astonishingly uniform, although each road, with hardly an exception, was built without regard to a general scheme.

cities and towns, is shown in Fig. 1. That so admirable a system of thoroughfares was secured automatically through the agency of systematically placed river valleys, shore lines, and general ground contours, coupled with the

well-distributed trading interests of the interior, is both fortunate and astonishing. Conscious planning, except of

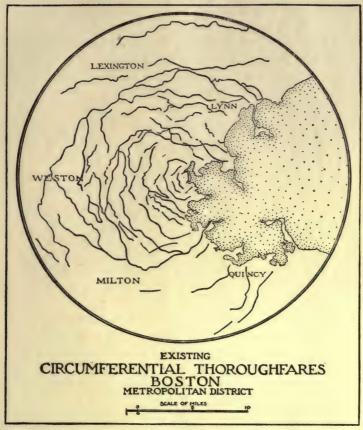


FIGURE 2.

This map shows upon a small scale the existing streets. These roads, taken as a whole, form the present cross-district system of highways. Their symmetrical distribution is notable, especially in view of their failure to make through connections, and illustrates the remarkable opportunity which the district possesses to create, by their coördination, an orderly and efficient system of circumferential thoroughfares.

the line and gradient of each separate radial, was never applied to this system. No general scheme for the placing of these roads was ever worked out, and no coöperation re-

garding them on the part of the cities and towns through which they pass has ever been accomplished, with the one exception that a Metropolitan commission has carefully described them and reported the need of taking them systematically in hand.

It will be seen at once that the polar forces which produced this system of radials could not exert as great an influence upon the development of thoroughfares tending to unite the district by circumferential ties. Fig. 2 shows to what degree coördination has occurred on these crossroads. The concentric position of these fragments, which all but unite to form a complete system, is wholly the result of natural forces working for and against town-totown communication, and is not a consequence of deliberate planning, except in the instance of parkways built within the last twenty years. Our forbears had no knowledge of these tendencies of their roads to group themselves. and they had no conception of the advantages of a system which would permit vehicles to pass conveniently not only from one town to its adjoining neighbor, but to continue without detour through town after town to more distant centers.

Fig. 3 indicates how completely the orientation of the scattered cities and towns about the parent Boston are determined by the direction of the main radials upon which the towns were founded. The common origin of these settlements, their common dependence upon the city of Boston, and the similarity of their daily life express themselves in a singular uniformity of plan. These street systems had the same naive origin as the streets of the Metropolitan District. These centers were laid out upon approximate checker-board systems modified to avoid irregularities of the ground and to lend themselves to arbitrary property lines and to other local difficulties. Without exception the main street of this checker-board leads directly towards Boston. Streets leading to adjoining communities on the opposite side of this main road rarely, if ever, connect

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directly with the first lateral. This characteristic jog at the crossing of the main street is of no great hindrance to the business of the town, but it constitutes a very serious obstacle in cross-district communication. The character-

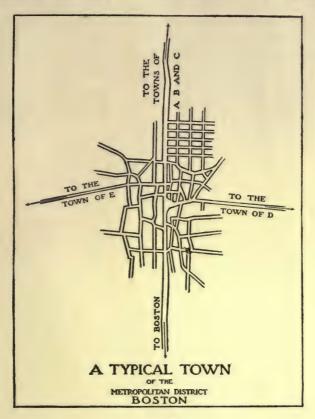


FIGURE 3.

istic plans of the majority of the cities and towns about Boston, including Lexington, Malden, Melrose, Everett, Waltham, Watertown, Weymouth, Brookline, and many others, is illustrated by the accompanying diagram. This plan also typifies the heart of old Boston in which the main street is represented by State Street and the lateral

streets by Devonshire Street, Merchants Row, and Broad Street, all of which cross State Street with annoying jogs. The serious handicap to business and to traffic which has been occasioned by this street arrangement in Boston is sufficient evidence of the evils which are to be expected from its repetition throughout all the older towns of the district.

Singularly enough, at this day, when the need of trunk communication throughout the district is greatest, and at a time when the methods of securing coordination are best understood, we are least able to take advantage of the good thoroughfare work which has already been done so miraculously and to head off the bad work which is creeping in. Our present problem is not so much to secure roads to fill the gaps between the cities and towns while correcting some of their imperfections, but it is rather to prevent individual land owners from clogging vacant lands with crooked roads, which by offsets, dead ends, and bad gradients tend effectually to block future thoroughfare development altogether. Blockades of this kind cannot be overcome like topographical barriers by the steam shovel and the rock drill, because they are fixed by legal entanglements and solidified by custom and investment until they become adamantine. Road building in the district about Boston was never so active as at present, and yet, measured by its service to main transportation, this activity was never so futile. Private individuals are building streets in many of the cities and towns faster than the authorities can provide sewers, water, sidewalks, and light. Town and city engineers are often obliged to devote their entire time to problems connected with these mushroom developments which might have been solved in a moment's time had the streets been properly located and connected. individuals have the right to take the initiative, and the towns follow as best they may. Many of the communities about Boston have given up all hope of controlling the line and gradient of private land subdivisions, so weak are the powers delegated to the public to protect its own interests,

and so expensive are the costs of correcting ill-adjusted streets when finally built. Few promoters of land sub-

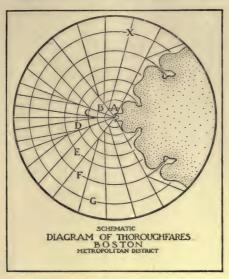


FIGURE 4.

Having indicated the general characteristics of the existing radial thoroughfares, and of the incipient circumferential thoroughfares, it remains to be shown that a combination of these two types of main roads when perfected would afford an efficient system of inter-communication for the district. The diagram shown above indicates in a purely schematic way the combination of a series of radial and circumferential lines comparable with the ultimate development of the existing and proposed thoroughfares of the district, with all local streets omitted. The absence of the more intimate connections which are actually afforded by these local streets places the diagram at a disadvantage, but it suffices to indicate the readiness with which a vehicle at any point, such as X, may proceed to any other points, such as A, B, C, D, E, by a variety of alternative routes. In fact, this combined scheme of radials and circumferentials which the district has been slowly approximating in a wholly unconscious manner during the last two centuries offers a system of intercommunication more direct than that which could be afforded by a rectangular gridiron similiar to those which characterize the plans of most American cities. It should be frankly admitted, however, that - in a decidedly minor aspect - a rigid gridiron scheme, like that of San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia, has at least one point of superiority over all city plans containing many diagonal lines, like the plan of Washington and Boston, all containing many curving lines, like Paris and Boston. This superiority lies in the fact that strangers may readily find their way in such uniform gridirons. To such strangers the streets of Boston and the Metropolitan District promise forever to be a puzzle, but on the other hand, these thoroughfares also promise to become more convenient for everyday use, more individual and more free from monotony than any other street system in America,

divisions are interested in the future of the towns in which they operate, and they cater to a market of small purchasers to whom readiness of access to the nearest car line,

railway station, or provision store is the only requisite of highway service. To such purchasers the extension of important thoroughfares is of no interest, and to the land speculator these main connections too often stand for an interference with personal rights. It is unfortunate that a prompt return from the sale of land cheaply subdivided and cheaply described is often a better policy for the land operator than a carefully planned subdivision of better site and gradient, which eventually may bring greater returns but at heavier initial cost for plans, construction, and transfers, and fraught with the risk of delays. There is no effective legal process now existing by which this community can secure for itself without prohibitive cost a control of street layouts essential to the convenient development of a whole district.

We do not need a Hausmann or a L'Enfante to solve the riddle or to start anew with a clean sheet of paper. The scheme of our road system is already fixed and promises, when completed, to be one of the most logical and convenient in the world. (See schematic diagram with foot notes.) When the gaps are filled and the more evident connections established, we may expect the plans of Paris and Washington to seem by comparison wanting in convenience and variety. It will be too early for us to boast, however, until the hundreds of miles of private roads which are being built here each decade are made to conform to this scheme. No brilliant intellect or ingenious wit is required to draw the plan; the most ordinary draughtsman can fill in blanks so obvious. Real ability is needed, however, to defend the public against the petty right of individuals to interpolate in a great plan of thoroughfares whatever hindrances in the form of irrelevant private streets fancy or means may suggest.

# STREET PLANNING IN NEWTON

## MR. EDWIN H. ROGERS

City Engineer

THE street system of Newton, Mass., is similar to that of most New England cities insomuch that it is not laid out on any predetermined plan, being mainly the outgrowth of and additions to a few ways of travel when its territory was but sparsely settled, and it also shares their good fortune in not being laid out on the checkerboard plan so common in other parts of the United States.

The subject of planning a street system for the future first received attention in Newton in the year 1869, but the favorable report of the committee which was appointed to consider the subject was not officially acted upon. The matter of supervision of the city plan of Newton was allowed to lapse until 1899, when it was suggested that the city would be benefited by a so-called board of survey act similar to that provided for the city of Boston in the year 1891. The authorities finally decided to let the matter drop, as was subsequently done in 1909, when the same recommendation was made.

The form that the board of survey act usually takes under the Massachusetts laws is to provide for a commission to pass upon the location, widths, grades, etc., of proposed new streets, and to require that streets built without the approval of such commission shall not be laid out nor have the benefit of sewerage, water, or other public utilities controlled by the city. Provision is also customarily made for the planning in advance for streets in undeveloped territory.

At the present time there are two cities and five towns in Massachusetts having boards of survey created by special legislative act. There is also a general law which any town can accept by vote and thereby vest in its selectmen the powers of a board of survey.

The problem of reconciling private land owners' interests and the convenience of the general public is a difficult one for the members of any board of survey and requires careful policy in all features of the work involved. Most owners naturally desire to get the most they possibly can out of their land, and in a city where the land is cut up into irregular-shaped parcels it is difficult for such a commission to do justice to both the private owner and the public and to harmonize the interests of the different owners, particularly where the topography admits of various forms of development and the streets to be built will never become thoroughfares.

The difficulties of planning lateral streets for the not immediate future is well recognized, particularly in Boston, where a large proportion of the original layouts filed by the board of survey in that city and the commission succeeding to its powers have been revised and annulled, in some instances because of too great waste of land, in others because the resulting lots on the streets as designed were of unsuitable size for the uses to which it was evident they would be put, and in yet others for the reason that it became apparent that the layout planned did not adequately meet public convenience.

The tendency in many instances in the planning of a wholesale system of streets by public authority is to provide streets of excessive width, particularly as regards widths of the traveled ways, thereby putting the municipalities to an undue burden in cost of maintenance to say nothing of the money uselessly expended in construction. The minimum width of residence streets in this section of the country is usually from 40 to 50 feet, but in many places it is obvious that while it would generally be inad-

visable to make the layout lines less than 40 feet apart, yet in streets of greater width the width of the portion graded for travel could be reduced from the general practice without detriment to the use of the street by the public until such time as the volume of travel demanded more width, thereby effecting economy in both investment and maintenance.

A building line restriction results in the same effect as that of a wide street, but puts the burden and responsibility of maintenance on the abutters instead of on the municipality.

In developing their property, many property owners find it convenient to locate a street along one of the division lines between their own and their neighbor's property. In such cases it often happens that the owner reserves a narrow strip, say one foot in width, between the street and the adjacent property line, unless the adjoining owner will contribute land or money for the new street. This reserved strip is desirable from the owner's standpoint, as he may rightly claim that his neighbor is not entitled to have the benefit of the new street for the use or development of his land without any cost to him, and it also tends to retard the building up of the neighboring land with houses that might be claimed to be undesirable to the firstmentioned property. The neighboring owner may be obliged to cut up his land with a street so close to the property line in question that the backs of the lots he may lay out will abut on the reserved strip, thereby resulting in two streets perhaps within a hundred feet of each other, usually an undesirable result.

Reserved strips of this nature have been the cause of considerable unpleasantness in many places, and in recent years it has not been the policy in Newton to lay out as public streets any private ways having reserved strips located beside them unless such strips are included as a part of the street. The reasons for this policy are, briefly, that the public streets are for the benefit of all the public

to give them access to the adjacent land and to give an owner an outlet from his property; also that it is unfair for an owner to be cut off from a public street and its numerous benefits, including sewerage, drainage, water, lighting, etc., by a piece of property that he may only be able to purchase at an exorbitant price if at all, and consequently be prevented from realizing the full value of his land; to say nothing of the loss of revenue by the municipality from the potential value of increased taxable property and the disadvantages of the less desirable street system likely to result therefrom.

It appears to be a fact that the courts will not sustain any laws prohibiting a man from laying out his land into such streets as he sees fit, and the only way that the practice can be regulated is by refusing such an owner public utilities. Definite information from more than sixty of the largest cities of the United States and Canada shows that some two thirds of that number attempt to regulate the location of new streets, but in most instances with only indifferent success, and it is apparent that ultimate success in city planning along good lines can best be aided and encouraged by educating the people to make the most of their opportunities for the encouragement of civic betterment.

# STREET PLANNING IN WATERTOWN

# MR. WILBUR F. LEARNED

Town Engineer

THE legislature of Massachusetts, by Chapter 272 of the Acts of 1900, passed an Act to establish a Board of Survev for the Town of Watertown, the purpose of which was to authorize the selectmen as a board of survey to obtain the laying out of private lands with reference to adjoining streets, and to obtain such locations of streets as would conform to an economical drainage or sewerage system. It was therefore made mandatory on all parties desiring to lay out, locate, or construct any street or way in said town before beginning such construction to submit to the Board of Survey suitable plans of such streets or ways, to be prepared in accordance with such rules and regulations as the board might prescribe. Upon the receipt of such plans, with a petition for their approval, the Board of Survey were required by the act to give a public hearing thereon after giving due notice in public print, and after such hearing the board was given the right to alter such plans and determine "where such streets or ways may be located, and the widths and grades thereof and shall so designate on said plans." The plans were then to be approved and signed by the board and filed in the office of the town clerk.

Following the text of the act, "If any person or corporation shall hereafter open for public travel any private way the location, direction, widths, and grades of which have not previously been approved in writing by the Board of Survey in the manner provided in this Act, then the

town or any other public authority shall not place any public sewer, drain, water pipes, or lamp in, or do any public work of any kind on, such private way so opened to public travel contrary to the provisions of this Act; provided, however, that these provisions shall not prevent the laying of a trunk sewer, water or gas main, if it be required by engineering necessities."

It would appear, from the synopsis of the Board of Survey Act for Watertown, that the town was well provided with authority to have all new streets systematically laid out with proper gradients to obtain sewerage and drain-

age without undue expense.

Let us see how the Board of Survey Act worked in Watertown with reference to a tract of land known locally as the Bemis Estate. This tract of about thirty acres is centrally located on a main thoroughfare extending from Boston through Watertown and Waltham, Weston and Sudbury, and also on a cross country street extending to Arlington and Lexington. It is elevated land with southern exposure overlooking the center of the town. It is easy of access by streets with favorable gradients and possesses all the requirements for first-class development.

The Bemis Estate was acquired by a company of land speculators who laid out the streets without reference to the adjoining street system of the town, and without reference to drainage or sewerage, with house lots of twenty-five feet frontage and as nearly alike in all cases as was possible.

No plan of streets was presented to the Board of Survey before construction nor was a petition for approval made, and only by an official notification demanding a hearing was the Board of Survey able to act in the matter.

At this hearing the Town Engineer showed the advisability of changing the location of the streets extending east and west by making them continuous with other adjoining streets of the town for the purpose of coördination, and as a matter of economy to the town when a system of

drainage and of sewerage should be laid out. The pretext given by the company for not adopting the street locations as shown by the board was on account of expense.

The hearing was closed without the approval of the com-

pany's plan.

The company continued the construction of the streets without regard to the hearing, knowing all the facts and conditions that would follow. The streets have been partly constructed by the removal of loam and the forming of walks with sub-soil. In a few instances the streets are cut through knolls to flatten what would otherwise make a very steep gradient; but in all cases they follow the topography of the land without regard to systematic grading, and even an inexperienced person would look on them as unfinished.

A few lots have been sold and buildings erected with no facilities for sewerage, water, or lighting except in those cases where the buildings have been erected within the Bemis Estate and abutting on public streets.

It may now be asked what benefit was the Board of Survey Act to the town of Watertown, or why was not the company compelled to lay out the streets in accordance with the suggestion of the board? My answer is, The power to regulate the use of private property depends upon what is called the police power, and can be exercised only when it is required for the protection of health or life, or for protection against fire. Except as the exercise of this police power may be necessary for the protection of the public in respect to health, life, and fire risks, every man has the right to unrestricted use of his own property, so far as he does not injure others. For this reason the owners of this tract of land could not be enjoined from laying out the streets as they proposed, nor could they be compelled to lay out streets in such manner as might be approved by the Board of Survey.

#### DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN, MR. NELSON P. LEWIS:

Mr. Shurtleff showed a number of instances where thoroughfares passing through centers of population were constructed at an entirely inadequate width for the demands of traffic upon them, and where up to the present time no parallel street which would with its added capacity give an adequate width has yet been provided. A number of you have doubtless seen the report for 1911 of the London Traffic Branch of the Board of Trade and will have noticed that, conservative as the English have heretofore been in their street widths, there is now a movement, a demand, for far more generous street capacity. They recommend as standards for main highways nothing less than one hundred feet in width. The trouble in constructing these radial highways out of London has been encountered in attempting to go through suburban towns. The towns resist vigorously any attempt to widen their streets. They are satisfied with existing conditions. A wide street with extensive traffic means to them perhaps passing automobiles with a whirl of dust, and their local tradesmen do not get any additional business.

It has been suggested that in dealing with this problem the thoroughfare should pass around the town entirely, if streets cannot be widened at reasonable expense. A number of such by-passes have been indicated in this report through towns in the metropolitan district of London.

It seems to me that there is there perhaps a suggestion of value and possibly a solution of some of our troubles. I recall a number of cases within the limits of the city of New York where old highways coming through from old settlements have a width at present of sixty feet. Some of you may be acquainted with Flushing, on Long Island, where old Broadway, leading out to the north shore of the island, goes up to and partly through the town of Flushing at a width of one hundred feet. A portion of it for a

certain distance is then contracted to 60 feet. It is true that it has been laid down on the map as a street of one hundred feet in width all the way through. The widening of the sixty-foot part to one hundred feet has been agitated, but there is a very vigorous protest against it and one that I suspect will be effective. Now, if the sixty-foot street is to remain, it seems to me most essential that a wide pass shall be provided through the less developed part of this old settlement, in order that people may travel properly through these towns on Long Island - Great Neck, Little Neck, Manhassett, Fort Washington, and so on. It is very important that the possible future development of that part of Long Island shall be recognized and that the thoroughfare shall be given this continuous width of one hundred feet, even though there must be something of a detour around the well-built portions of Flushing.

A good deal has been said about the expense of acquiring property for streets. I cannot see, for the life of me, why property which is taken for a street, which will convert the abutting property into city lots, should be paid for on a city lot basis when the property is not city lots, but nothing but farms. The property is good for nothing else; it is acreage property. And yet when we lay out a normal street of sixty feet in width through that property and thereby convert it from farm property into lots, the owners expect and demand compensation for the land taken just as though it comprised city lots.

Liverpool was the first city in England to have extraordinary powers given to it in connection with this matter. The year before the enactment of the English Town Planning Act, Parliament authorized the city of Liverpool to take without any compensation whatever land which was free from improvements up to a width of thirty-six feet, which was the normal minor street width. But the act also provided that if the local legislative authorities of the city of Liverpool were to determine that in a particular location more than thirty-six feet were required, that a width

up to eighty feet was required, then eighty feet could be taken without any compensation whatever. It seems to me there is an inherent justice and equity in such a provision, provided of course that a man will have left a normal lot depth on either side of the street. Of course, if his property is mutilated, if you take all he has or leave him property that is not valuable for development, he must in fairness be paid for it, but not on a city lot basis.

# MAJOR JOSEPH W. SHIRLEY, Baltimore, Md.:

I should like to refer to some little legislation that we thought was simple when it was passed, which has proved to be very effective in taking care of the troublesome situation when a property owner insists on doing as he pleases with his land. A few years ago Baltimore annexed a considerable area for which a topographical map was prepared and on that map a street plan was laid out. Our trouble was to keep the owners from developments for speculative purposes not in conformity with the plan. For four or five years we have had very little success in bringing many of them to terms. Then the act to which I have referred prohibited the city from accepting the deed or dedication of any street that did not conform to the plan that had been adopted, or that plan as amended. amendment of that plan can only be made by the joint action of the commission that has it in charge and the mayor and the city council. If the city does not own a street it has no authority to spend any money on it, and we have been able for the last few years, by making the matter as public as we could, to show that a man who has a street which is a private street, and which by law will have to remain a private street for all time, has a great deal more trouble in disposing of his property than if it is a street which the city will maintain. The speculator in Baltimore, probably as everywhere else, after he sells out his lots, moves away to other fields, and leaves the condition of affairs he has created behind him. But the

people have now got to a point where they appreciate the situation, and when they buy a house they will look to see that the street is on the city plan.

I have in mind the case of one man who disregarded the plan and did with his property as he pleased. Now by his own statement he has lost a good deal of money and still has the houses on his hands.

We have another perplexing problem regarding private streets in the territory which has been annexed. When this land became part of Baltimore in 1888, it was taken in under a contract that until 1900 the tax rate on the property annexed would be exactly the same as it was in Baltimore county at the time, or sixty cents on \$100, and that after 1900 it would remain at that same rate until the streets were opened and graded around a block and six houses were built. Now, we want to assess the property that has been built on these private streets a higher rate of tax, but we don't want to take the streets in many cases, because they do not conform to the plan. This situation is a real drawback to the proper development of our city plan. I think in the course of a little time, however, we will work it out in some suitable shape.

# MR. E. P. GOODRICH, New York City:

I will indulge in a little prophecy. Some of my work has been along what you might call legal engineering lines. In Manhattan we are beginning to take very energetic steps to remove encroachments where people have crept out onto the street line. On the other side of the continent Los Angeles has been having some trouble with the tide land suits. In looking up the law and in having experience with this sort of thing I find the courts have decided in several cases — and I have in mind one or two instances of the appraisal of public corporation assets — that where the public interest runs counter to private development it should be superseded, the individual being enabled in the last instance to carry out a scheme which would run

counter to the paramount interests of the general public. I believe, however, that within a few years — even though some decisions of late have ruled that it would take a constitutional amendment, in view of what the Constitution of the United States says as to individual property rights — the courts will have swung in the other direction and said that the paramount interest of the general public will supersede that of the individual in such things as the opening of streets or building lines in connection with special development.

In the general discussion which followed emphasis was laid on the necessity of subdividing for streets and lots with the human viewpoint more in mind. Only brief summaries of the discussion are given.

#### MR. H. J. KELLAWAY:

City planning will fail in a most important essential if it does not provide for the payer of small rent a home of his own with room enough around it to insure healthful conditions and an expression of individuality. We have been speaking too exclusively of land values; we must think more of the social and human side of the problem.

# MR. A. W. CRAWFORD:

I am glad that the last speaker has emphasized the health feature of city planning and the importance of making it possible for each man to own his own house. Great changes in our social status are bound to come as a result of the spread of the democratic doctrines of England and Germany in this monarchical country of ours. When these changes come they will be met more conservatively and considerately, with due regard for the rights of others if each man is his own landlord.

# THE CHAIRMAN:

While I think everybody must be in entire sympathy with Mr. Crawford and Mr. Kellaway, in their advocacy of the independently owned home for the working man, we must provide him also with more adequate protection against the real estate operator who fraudulently gets every dollar of his money for the purchase of a home by representing that so much down and so much a month will pay for his house. It turns out that mortgages and assessments for all kinds of improvements are later charged against the property, and the owner is unable to meet the payments. In cases of this kind I think he would be better off if he did not own his house.

# MRS. ROLLIN NORRIS:

It seems to me that if there should be some propaganda to meet the American attitude that has been expressed here tonight, that every man has a right to do as he wishes, it would do a great deal of good. A man who takes the ground that every one has a right to do as he wishes should add the proviso that he does n't interfere with the rights of others. There is too prevalent a fear that any progressive action may interfere with the rights of individual property owners. That attitude, I think, is not the attitude of people generally, but of a great many conservatives whose influence is far-reaching.

# THE LEGISLATION NECESSARY FOR INTELLI-GENT CITY PLANNING

Street Planning and the Law of Massachusetts

Mr. WILLIAM F. WILLIAMS

City Engineer, New Bedford, Mass.

In twenty years' experience in the engineering department of the city in Massachusetts which has the record of having made the largest growth in the last ten years of any city in the Commonwealth, I have necessarily been brought a great deal in contact with the law in its relation particularly to the layout of streets. I realize that we are and must be a government by law, and that if we ever expect to realize our dreams in regard to city planning it must be done in conformity with law.

Cities and towns of this Commonwealth derive their sole authority to lay out streets or ways from the General Court. Existing laws on the subject were drafted many years ago and have not been revised to meet the requirements of the present-day purpose and use of streets in their relation to the material and esthetic necessities of a growing city.

The present law relating to the creation of a street is included in Chapter 48 of the Revised Laws, and while a few cities have special laws on the subject they do not add anything material to the powers granted in the general law. The theory on which the law of today is founded is,

Note. — This subject and the four following were chosen for discussion out of a list of fifteen submitted to the members of the conference. The discussions were, for the most part, extemporaneous.

first, that there is an immediate necessity for a highway for public travel; second, that there is also to be an immediate adjustment of the damages created by the taking of private property. That there must be an immediate necessity is shown by the opening words of the law, "If common convenience and necessity require a new highway." Certain sections of the law refer to the petition of those citizens who actually want the highway, which was originally the first step to be taken in the creation of a way. Then again, in the matter of damages, if the award of the authorities is not satisfactory, the appeal for a jury must be made within one year "from the day when the highway is entered upon and possession taken for the purpose of constructing the same." Furthermore, possession must be taken within two years or the layout is void. All of which shows that in the minds of the framers of the law a highway was a thing of necessity in the immediate present, and not a question of the future.

Under these laws no city can adequately plan for the future without incurring obligations that are prohibitory.

The law makes no provision for the projection of a street on paper in advance of its requirement for public use. A city might attempt such planning by local ordinance, but it would have no standing as against the plans or wishes of the owners of the land over which the street is to be located.

As the law stands today, a city must lay out and accept a public street or way, pay the damages, enter upon and construct it within two years, and thereafter maintain it in a condition that the law will construe as reasonably safe for public use. On the other hand, an owner of land may lay out streets through his property to suit his pleasure or convenience, sell lots on the same, and without any public control define what will ultimately become a public street. Practically an individual has usurped a function fixed by law in certain officials. It is true, the municipal authorities can say when it shall become a public street, but suppose they refuse, the loser is not the real offender,

because he has sold out, but the innocent purchaser who has improved his property and wants those public utilities which he cannot have except in a public street.

The creation of a public street should be a public function from its inception to its completion. The various uses of public streets have long been a matter of public control. Why should not the same authorities control all the steps leading to the creation of a public street?

A law recognizing this principle might seem to be a serious invasion of the rights of property, but only so in the statement, because cities must always grow in the direction in which land is for sale and public authorities would have to plan to meet all such contingencies.

Greater power in the matter of the projection of streets is of vital importance to the cities of this Commonwealth. The very life of a city is controlled through its streets. The words "common convenience and necessity" have grown to cover a meaning which the early framers of our highway laws could never have even dreamed of. Water, sewers, gas, surface and elevated railroads, electric wires, conduits, subways, and the future care of utilities of which we now know nothing, are all in addition to the simple providing of a way for vehicles and pedestrians, which is about all that the early framers of the law knew about. And beyond all these utilities of life comes the question of making a city more attractive and more beautiful so that it may become something more than a place to which one goes to make money.

To sum up, I believe our public authorities should have the power to project streets in advance of their acceptance. No damages should be allowed on the projection of a street, but upon its acceptance as a public street damages should be determined as at present. Owners of land should not be allowed to define streets not in conformity with those projected by the city.

Sufficiency of City Planning Legislation in New York
City

Mr. G. W. Tillson, Consulting Engineer to the Borough of Brooklyn, New York:

As this question has been presented here for discussion this morning, it means, of course, that there are certain cities which do not have the requisite authority for proper city planning. I thought, therefore, it might be interesting to tell the conditions in New York City, where no further legislation is necessary for city planning of any kind. The basis of all our work is the city map. Upon the city map must be laid out by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, which is the governing legislative body there, the location of every street, parkway, and public park, before anything can be done towards its acquisition. The law there is practically the same as that recommended by the city engineer of New Bedford, who has just spoken. No property owner can lay out any street or have any legal authority in connection with the matter, without its first having been put upon the city map and afterwards adopted by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment.

In the borough of Brooklyn, which comprises about sixty-seven square miles, the entire area has been mapped by the city authorities, and when it becomes necessary to acquire title to any of those streets, authority is given by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, and appraisers, or commissioners as they are called there, are appointed by the Supreme Court. After those commissioners have filed their report, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment can take title in the street or parkway at once, provided there are no buildings on the street. If there are any buildings on the street, the title cannot vest until six months after the filing of the report. Then the property owner receives interest, when the final adjudication has been made for damages, from the time the title was vested.

The Board of Estimate and Apportionment, when it passes a resolution to vest title, determines and states in this resolution just how the cost of acquiring the title shall be raised, how much shall be paid by the city, how much by the property owners, and also determines the area upon which the assessment shall be laid, provided any is laid.

A recent law passed by the legislature in the session of 1911 makes possible a different rule of assessment. New York is divided into five large boroughs, and an improvement might be made which would be a benefit both to the borough and to the entire city. Legislation of 1911 will allow, in the case of the creation of a park in Staten Island, for instance, an assessment of fifty per cent on the city at large, twenty-five per cent on the borough, and twenty-five per cent on private property especially benefited. What I wish to make clear is that any legal requirement that is necessary for city planning is already vested in the Board of Estimate and Apportionment.

# The City Planning Powers of Toronto

MR. J. C. FORMAN, Assessment Commissioner:

I have the honor to appear before you as a member of the Toronto Board of Trade. Our board of 2600 members, similar, I presume, in its functions to the Chamber of Commerce in your cities, is representative of the commercial interests and of all that pertains to the general betterment of the city of Toronto. Town planning is now in part occupying its attention. We believe that this subject is of the utmost importance in the future development both of the city and of contiguous and new suburban properties.

It may be interesting to know just what city planning statutory powers the city of Toronto possesses. Just this year the Ontario legislature passed an act which gives the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board power to pass on all plans which assume to lay out vacant blocks of land situate within our present municipal limits. It goes even

further and provides that the plans of all outlying lands shall conform to a general plan to be prepared by the city which may cover the territory five miles in any direction outside the city limits. No plan may be registered nor any lots sold therefrom until the plan has been approved by the said Board. This act came into force on the 4th of May last.

We have had the power for several years to extend, widen, or open any street under what is termed our local improvement system, which, briefly speaking, means that the cost of such work may in part be levied against the lands directly benefited, whether fronting on or off the line of improvement, the city assuming the balance of the cost. Such work may be done in three ways:

First, under a petition signed by the owners whose lands will be assessed for a share of the cost. To be valid two thirds of the property owners representing at least one half the total value of the property assessed must sign the petition.

Second, under the "initiative system," by which the property owners have the right to petition against the

proposed improvement.

Third, under a forced recommendation adopted by two thirds of the members of council, and which may not be petitioned against, and this includes pavements, sidewalks, and boulevards. In all cases a joint report of the City Engineer and Assessment Commissioner is necessary, and must be adopted by council, which report gives the frontage liable to assessment and cost of work, the city's share of the cost, the number of years (generally ten years) over which the assessment is to be levied. Property owners have the right to appeal from any such assessment to the Court of Revision, a separate court appointed by the Ontario government. The appellant is allowed the right to appeal to the Railway and Municipal Board from the decision of the Court of Revision where the improvement is estimated to cost \$50,000 or over. Under the Local

Improvement Act, which has accomplished a great deal in the way of street extensions, we are at present widening several of our principal town line streets from sixty-six to eighty-six and one hundred feet, at an estimated cost of about \$1,000,000, the city in this case, by vote of council, paying seventy-five per cent of the total cost. In widening these thoroughfares the owner of the land taken is compensated for the value of the land and for the disturbance to his business. If amicable settlements cannot be arrived at, the question of compensation is referred to the Official Arbitrator, who is appointed by the local government.

Toronto has also the power of excess condemnation by its right to condemn two hundred feet of land more than is necessary for the widening or extension on either side of the proposed street and the whole of the lot where the same is entered upon in part, when such lot extends beyond two hundred feet. The municipality in such case is required to sell such surplus land within seven years of its acquirement. The object, of course, is to allow the municipality to share in the profits of such improvement by the sale of such land, thus reducing the cost to the ratepayers.

Congestion of the central parts of our cities appears to be as great as it is in the larger American cities, and the people will be called upon soon to vote on such improvements as diagonal streets and tube lines. Much of the congestion is owing to the fact that Toronto has only one important north and south retail business thoroughfare, Yonge Street, a town line about sixty-six feet wide and two and a half miles long in the present city limits. To relieve congestion in the central portion by the establishment of parallel streets or diagonals will mean the condemning of land the value of which is from \$2500 to \$10,000 a front foot. Naturally the ratepayers hesitate before accepting a proposition which means increased taxation, but it is thought by a well-considered plan, including

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the taking of additional land over and above that necessary for the widening made, the improvement will eventually be voted.

In closing, let me refer briefly to other city planning powers given our municipality. In residential districts we may pass by-laws prohibiting the erection of houses within any reasonable distance of the street line.

The erection of apartment houses may be prohibited in any residential district, or in any street to be named in the council's decision.

We have power to extend and construct street railway lines in any part of the city not now occupied by the present street railway system, if sanctioned by vote of people and approved by the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board.

We have also power to construct and maintain industrial steam railway sidings.

Under the Public Health Act the Medical Health Officer may close any dwelling deemed by him unfit for occupation.

# DISCUSSION

MR. OLMSTED:

Mr. Williams, of New Bedford, stated the difficulties under which New Bedford, in common with other cities in this state, has labored in dealing with the subject of city planning, particularly street planning. Those difficulties are pretty general. The point is this: There are no inherent obstacles anywhere to interfere with a city's planning its streets as thoroughly and as far in advance as the appropriating bodies of the city will provide money for. There is no trouble about that, except to get the money to pay for the planning. The difficulty is to control private development in accordance with the plan after you have got it. There are two alternatives. The first method is to make the plan binding upon land owners, so that land designated on the plan for streets, for example, cannot

be used for buildings or for other purposes obstructive to the execution of the plan. This amounts to the acquirement of certain public rights in the land, and the land owner must be paid for those rights. There is no dodging that payment. If such rights are not taken, then some indirect means must be used to induce owners to develop in accordance with the plan. That is the second method. Various devices have been used in different cities to make it more convenient for the owner to follow the plan than to disregard it. By the exercise of sufficient ingenuity conditions can be made pretty uncomfortable for the owner who disregards the plan; but you cannot compel him to avoid other uses of the land, cannot compel him to keep vacant the land you want for future streets, without paying him when you put that encumbrance on his property.

The devices used in different localities for making it uncomfortable for him when he disregards the paper plan of the city are various. The principal one, of course, is refusal to accept streets laid out at variance with the plan, and refusal to construct sewers and water mains in those streets. That is a threat, and is in some cities extremely effective. In others it is very ineffective, because it is a bluff, and it soon becomes known as a bluff. Where, as so often happens, the original layer-out of the streets, an irresponsible person, sells the property and goes away, leaving the innocent purchaser, as Mr. Williams has pointed out, to deal with the difficulties arising from disregard of the city plan, the city finds it extremely hard to live up to its threat.

But this method of control is used pretty systematically in certain cities, and in those cities people have learned that it does not pay to buy lots on streets which are not in accordance with the city plan. In some cities it is practically impossible to obtain a mortgage on such lots from the large mortgage houses.

There are many other devices essentially of the same kind which make it uncomfortable for people who do not

adhere to the plan, even though it remains nothing but a paper plan, without any legal force until its several parts are successively put into execution. I think Pennsylvania is the only state in which the streets as laid out on a plan are really legally binding upon the property, and in which damages are not paid at the time of the imposition of that encumbrance on the land.

ANDREW WRIGHT CRAWFORD, Esq., Philadelphia:

In speaking of Pennsylvania, Mr. Olmsted stated that in that state alone there appears to be an effective town planning system, and intimated that possibly the same system could not be adopted in other states. I am of opinion that the same system can be adopted in other states in effect.

We make it uncomfortable for property owners not to comply with an official plan as laid out by our constituted authorities, generally called bureaus of survey, by providing that if an owner does interfere with that plan by building within the limits of a plotted street, for instance, then when the street is legally opened he shall not get damages for his building. That hits his pocket, and works well.

When we plot on the city plan a street across a man's property, the plotting prevents him from using his property as he chooses and is to that extent a deprivation of his rights.

I believe other states can adopt the principle in this way, by providing that after plotting a street — and of course the same principle applies to parks and other areas — no one shall erect a building within the lines of the street unless he is willing to waive all damages for the building when the property is taken; providing that if the street after plotting is changed he shall then get damages for the loss of the full use of the property meanwhile, between the date of plotting and that of the change of location of the street; and further providing that if the street is not changed, but is later legally and physically opened, then

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and then only he shall get damages, which shall include the rights taken from him at the time the street was plotted plus the damages for the delay in giving damages, from the date of original plotting to the date of actual opening. That gives him a right of recovery for every bit of loss he has sustained.

I know of no decision which holds that you cannot defer the award of damages for the opening of a street, providing the individual who owns property through which it will run is sure to get damages some time. That is to say, you must enable him by due process of law to get the damages for the right he loses, but you do not have to give them to him within one month or one year.

I pass to another point that was brought to my attention very strongly last year, the matter of home rule for cities. In Pennsylvania there is absolutely no demand for home rule, because we have it, and we have it as a result of a paragraph, a sentence, in the state constitution. I do not remember the exact words, but the constitution provides that the General Assembly shall pass no local or special law affecting the affairs of cities. The result is that every act of the legislature must be general in character. The legislature cannot pick out one or another city. If this provision had been construed strictly, Philadelphia, with a population of 1,600,000, would have been under exactly the same laws as Harrisburg, for instance, with a population of 50,000 or 75,000. But the Supreme Court, by a decision which was at least practically wise, whether legally accurate or not, has permitted us to classify cities. Philadelphia is in the first class, Pittsburgh and Scranton in the second class, and all other cities in the third class. But even with that interpretation local legislation for Philadelphia is not direct. All acts to affect Philadelphia must be for cities of the first class. Philadelphia cannot be mentioned. The terminology must be general. has resulted in the total absence of a demand for local home rule to which I referred. A provision of this kind,

permitting classification of cities into three, possibly four, classes, put into other state constitutions, would, I believe, work in exactly the same way, and effectively secure home rule through the generality of the law. Then, instead of one city asking for a special charter, and another demanding a somewhat different charter, you will have the several cities coming together, and you can determine what is good for all, and a concurrent and consistent demand will get more attention than several diverse ones. It seems to me that this provision is as important as any that can be suggested for state constitutions generally, as far as municipal affairs are concerned.

# Mr. John Ihlder, New York City:

It is a painful thing to follow such a beautiful picture as Mr. Crawford has given us with any criticism, but I understand that in Ohio there is a similar provision of law calling for general legislation. I understand that the legislature there gets around it by passing a law, not apparently applying to any particular city, but to cities, we will say, having two streets, such as Washington and Main streets, intersecting each other. The city for which the legislation is desired meets that particular requirement and is the only one which does. In Michigan, when they came to adopt a constitution, they studied the Pennsylvania system and decided that it was so difficult for cities like Pittsburgh and Scranton, two second-class cities, to get together when one of them needed something, that classification of cities would not do for Michigan.

# MR. CRAWFORD:

One word in reply to Mr. Ihlder. If there were any act passed referring to a city with intersecting streets by the name of Broad and Chestnut streets, the Supreme Court would knock it out, as it has knocked out act after act, simply on the ground that it was attempting an improper classification. If you get a Supreme Court that regards

the will of the people, I am sure there will not be any difficulty about it.

# Mr. A. L. Schaeffer, Borough of the Bronx, N. Y .:

A large portion of the island of Manhattan was mapped under a law of 1807, which provided that no buildings should be erected within street lines after they had been shown on the map. So far as I know, this law was in existence until the enactment of the Greater New York charter in 1897. Some years previous to that there was an unimportant lawsuit on this question, which was decided against the constitutionality of the law.

What I would like to know is, if the law which is now in existence in the state of Pennsylvania, which applies, I understand, to the three classes of cities in a little different form, has been thoroughly tested in the courts. The reason for declaring the law in the state of New York unconstitutional, I understand, is due to the provision in the constitution that no private property shall be taken for public uses without due process of law and without compensation. I understand the courts have held that the laying aside of property within street lines and preventing the erection of buildings on it, is an improper taking of private property. I should like to know if the Pennsylvania law has been thoroughly tested in the courts.

# Mr. CRAWFORD:

It was upheld at common law and later the Act of 1871, embodying the same principle, which act expressly applied only to Philadelphia, was declared constitutional by the Supreme Court. This act has since been made to apply to all the cities of Pennsylvania by the Act of 1891.

# MR. R. N. CLARK, Hartford, Conn.:

In Hartford we discourage professional building promoters who come into a town and endeavor to exploit large areas of land for their own pecuniary advantage and to

the decided disadvantage of the citizens at large and of the persons who attempt to buy those lots in this way. The City Plan Department, which is now in its fifth year, is required by the law to put its acceptance or its disapproval upon the proposition to lay out any street before the street can become accepted by the city. In that way the citizens of Hartford or people coming there to buy lots on comparatively new streets or on proposed streets are very careful not to buy on a street where there is any question of its final acceptance by the city. A promoter coming into the town must file his map also with the town clerk, and the clerk will not accept it for filing unless it has the approval of the commission for the city plan.

The general discussion was participated in by Mrs. Rollin Norris, Mr. F. L. Olmsted, Mr. A. W. Crawford, Hon. Charles Hopewell, and Mr. G. W. Lemon. The discussion brought out the necessity of effective control by the municipality, not only of subdivisions within the city limits, but for at least five miles beyond, in order to insure a harmonious system of thoroughfares and local streets.

# THE REGULATION OF THE HEIGHT OF FIREPROOF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

#### MR. ARTHUR C. COMEY

American Society of Landscape Architects, Cambridge

The principles involved in building height regulation are so obscured by many complex factors, when all classes of structures are considered, that I desire to confine the present discussion to one class only, the strictly fireproof commercial buildings, in which three underlying factors alone are of controlling importance to the public — congestion, light and air, and architectural effect. Though these three factors are dependent directly on width of street, limitations in many American cities ignore it and but very imperfectly meet any of the conditions.

Regulations in force, and proposed, may be classified in six main groups:

- 1. The flat limit, if low, gives relatively uniform architectural effect, but does not permit the tower building, which has both architectural and practical value, and does not consider the width of street, though it bears an imperfect relation to congestion over large areas.
- 2. Limit to height proportioned to width of street covers the factor of light and air precisely, but does not permit tower buildings, though it does encourage architectural uniformity.
- 3. Height controlled by a sloping line from opposite side of the street takes into account light and air only, and is not adapted to effective architectural treatment.
- 4. Height controlled by area of cross-sections or elevations may meet congestion in part, but is apt to be confusing and is seldom adapted to architectural effect.

5. Limit by cubage, that is, total volume, covers the factor of congestion over large areas only, and does not meet the requirements of light and air, for the entire building may be built as a great wall on the street line.

6. Limit by cubage proportioned to width of street covers the factor of congestion precisely, and permits effective architectural treatment, but is open to the same objection as the simple cubage method in the matter of light and air.

A combination of the second and last of these methods will evidently be most effective. Cubage (and therefore the factor of congestion) and the average height of the front elevation (and therefore the factor of light and air) will vary directly as the width of the street, and the tower building will be encouraged without the abuse of its unrestricted adoption. Furthermore, the regulation should be simple in its provisions and clear in its application. Leaving out all accessory factors, the following regulation has been worked out for the concrete case of Houston, Tex., a city of intermediate size, with rather uniformly broad streets representing quite ideal conditions. With narrower streets or greater population, the actual proportions might need to be changed, but the principle would remain the same.

A building may occupy its entire lot to a height not exceeding the width of the principal street upon which it faces, and not exceeding in any case one hundred feet. Above this height the cubage of the building shall not exceed one fourth of such height multiplied by the area of the lot.

#### DISCUSSION

MR. GEORGE DUDLEY SEYMOUR, New Haven, Conn.:

I was very much interested three years ago in an effort to limit the height of buildings facing New Haven Green. I tried very hard to interest the Chamber of Commerce and the community in the passing of an ordinance, but did not

succeed. Within the last four years we have had four buildings projected on the Green to the height of one hundred and forty feet, and it has been a great source of distress to me and, now that some of the buildings are erected, a great dissatisfaction to the people of New Haven. I am assured from a great many quarters that lately the tendency in American cities has not been to attempt to limit the height of buildings to any great extent. I should like to ask what the trend of opinion and practice on the subject is.

# MR. W. T. Johnson, San Diego, Cal .:

I am very sorry to have to present to the conference a very gloomy report on the question of the regulation of heights of buildings in this country. Within three months I have had statistics of practically all the large cities in the United States which have sought to regulate the height of buildings, and apparently Boston, with a height limit of one hundred and twenty-five feet, is in the best position. A great many other cities either have set no limits whatever or have put a limit such as that of Chicago, of two hundred feet, which I think we all believe will make decidedly for congestion. The city of San Diego happened several months ago, by some chance, to pass an act limiting the height of buildings to one hundred feet, which was a very progressive measure, more so than any measure passed anywhere in this country. But San Diego is in entire control of people who are interested in the real estate business, which consists of about twelve elevenths of all the population, and for that reason they were very soon able to amend that statute so that now they will either have to have buildings to a height of one hundred and fifty feet or no limit whatever.

I think what we must finally do, perhaps, will be to look to Germany or to Europe, as we always have been looking, to get some ideas about regulation of the height of buildings, and either adopt a uniform height above which build-

ings may not go, and have it a very low height, or else adopt the scheme which I think Mr. Comey spoke of, of having each succeeding story stepped back, so that its cornice line will meet the cornice line of the story above it at an angle of forty-five degrees, which would not cut off sunlight.

The general discussion was participated in by Mr. Johnson, Mr. Seymour, Mr. C. F. Puff, Jr., Hon. F. C. Howe, and Mr. Veiller, at the close of which the following resolution was passed by the Conference:

Voted, that the desirability of collecting the ordinances and practices of American and European cities bearing on the height of buildings be referred to the Executive Committee for consideration, with Mr. Johnson's coöperation and assistance.

# HOW A WORCESTER, MASS., BANK DISCOURAGES THE "THREE-DECKER" HOUSE

#### MR. ALFRED L. AIKEN

President of the Worcester County Institution for Savings

When your Secretary was good enough to ask me to use five minutes of your time in explaining some of the measures that we have taken in Worcester (to discourage the so-called "three-decker" house), I hesitated about doing it because our attempt was so mild in form and the results as yet have hardly been definite enough to be worth recording, but having assurance from him that whatever we had done might be of some interest, I am glad to have an opportunity to present it.

Perhaps it might be well to define more definitely the type of house that we call a "three-decker." It is rectangular in shape, with a frontage of twenty-five or thirty feet and a depth of forty-five to sixty feet, built of wood, of the most bare and plain style, with either a tar and gravel roof, or a very low, pitched roof slated or shingled, and containing three similar tenements, one above the other. These houses, as the price of lumber and labor has gone up, have been built of cheaper and cheaper material and are built as close to one another as the law permits. It is this type against which we have been waging a very mild warfare.

I am not sure as to the origin of the "three-decker," but from its prevalence in Worcester I suspect that we are the responsible parents; at any rate, I think that our city has suffered more than any other from its construction.

No one with an observing eye can fail to notice the tier upon tier of these monotonous, unattractive houses that rise on the hillsides, on either side of the railroad tracks, as one passes through the city.

The Worcester County Institution for Savings, with which I am connected, is interested in Worcester real estate to the extent of \$12,000,000 or more of mortgages, and it has seemed to us that we were confronted with a real problem in the poor development of local housing conditions through the local preference for this type of house.

Of course we recognized the fact that if these houses were not available as a basis for loans, their construction would stop, but from numerous conferences with those who had money to loan on real estate mortgages, it became apparent that plenty of money could be found to finance these undertakings, and that it would be useless for any one lender of money on mortgages to try to stem the general tide, because nothing in the way of restraint would be accomplished and he would lose one of his most profitable sources of investment, a fact that we have to consider as much as the altruistic side of the matter.

We finally decided that if something could be done to call the attention of the public to a better and more attractive type of construction this might act as a sort of counter-irritant, and while encouraging the building of the cottage house might discourage the building of the "three-decker."

Worcester seems to be a particularly hopeful place for such an undertaking because of the fact that we have a very large permanent population of mechanics of the highest class who are the very type that enjoy the feeling of proprietorship and family privacy of a detached house of their own.

With this in mind, we published the following advertisement which I may perhaps be permitted to read, as it expresses our purpose as briefly as I have been able to do it.

#### NOTICE TO HOME BUILDERS

For the benefit of those interested in owning their homes, the Worcester County Institution for Savings has made an extensive collection of elevations and plans of inexpensive, detached houses that should cost from \$1500 to \$3000 to build. Persons interested in building attractive, detached houses for homes for themselves and their families are invited to avail themselves of these plans at any time.

While the Worcester County Institution for Savings is prepared to make mortgage loans at any time upon houses of the above description, it should be understood that the use of these plans implies no obligation whatever toward the institution. These plans have been collected and offered to the public for the sole purpose of encouraging better housing conditions, by which it is believed the whole community will benefit.

> Worcester County Institution for Savings, ALFRED L. AIKEN, President.

Before publishing this advertisement, we obtained, through the advertising columns of such papers as Country Life in America, a large number of books of plans, principally from architects in the Middle West, and from books so obtained we selected those in which the elevations and plans and general type of construction seemed best suited to our local conditions: we then consulted with one or two reliable carpenters and small builders in regard to the costs of construction, for the costs that were attached to the plans were absurdly low in most cases, and got an approximate figure for the construction of a number of typical houses.

We were very much surprised after our advertisement appeared, and it appeared only once in each of our three papers, to find the general interest that it aroused, and for months afterward there was hardly a day that from two or three to fifteen or twenty people did not come in to look over our elevations and plans.

Perhaps twenty houses have been built practically from plans found in our files. We are sure of about this number, how many more have been suggested of course we are

unable to tell, but a much more important result, to our minds, has been the fact that a very general interest has been aroused in cottage houses as against the tenement houses in our community.

The newspapers, both in Worcester and outside, took a considerate interest in the scheme and did everything that they could to further it, and a Home Building Company somewhat on the lines of Boston's most admirable Boston Dwelling House Company is now under consideration in Worcester.

It would hardly be fair to close this statement without admitting that we put another advertisement in the papers this spring, thinking that it would be well to continue the work, and the result so far as people calling upon us for information has been disappointing. Of course the element of novelty has disappeared, and while we have calls every week from a number of people, undoubtedly those who were promoted by curiosity have had that satisfied and do not now come in.

We recognize the fact that the greater the center of population, the greater the necessity of contracted housing space, but we feel in a city like Worcester, where land on the outskirts is comparatively cheap, that the tenement house should be discouraged so far as practicable. The three-tenement house may be a necessity in some places, but we do not believe it is for Worcester, because there is plenty of land, plenty of air, and plenty of light which can be obtained at a small cost, and we are doing what we can to make these three available for the detached house.

We look with somewhat envious eyes on the admirable work that is being undertaken in Boston by your Boston Dwelling House Company, and along similar lines in various other cities, but of course this is out of our province. All that we have done has been to use our influence where opportunity arose in the actual course of our business to encourage better housing conditions in our own local community.

It seems to us that the cottage house, where real estate conditions are akin to those existing in Worcester, is the ideal one for the man of moderate means, for we believe that the establishment of the house for himself and his family, because of its more attractive surroundings and because of its decent privacy, makes him a better citizen and makes for better physical as well as social development of the city as a whole.

#### DISCUSSION

MR. JOHN P. Fox, Utica, N. Y.:

The greatest problem in our city today, I think, is the problem of getting the tenement house population in some way to find more comfortable housing conditions, both for the poor people and the people who are well to do. difficulty with that problem is the financial one, - how on the same amount of land to accommodate people in single houses? Philadelphia, of course, is a model city today in the matter of single houses, and there the number of single houses to the acre is very high indeed. But it is possible to get even more on the land than they get in Philadelphia, and it can be done by having interior lots, that is to say, by having lots reached by passageways from street to street, instead of having each house facing on the street itself. That is done, as you know, in Europe in a number of In Berlin interior lots are very large, and some large streets reach interior lots.

I would suggest that the study of this question is a very interesting one in connection with remedying the evil of the tenement houses and the three-flat houses. Taking the situation in Boston, I think it possible to take land on which you now find these three-family houses, and to put as many single houses on that land as will accommodate the same number of people, with more space than you get under present conditions. In the city of Utica I made some practical studies to see what could be done, and found that

you can take the worst slums in Utica, buy them at the market value, tear down the houses and put up single houses, have as much accommodation on that slum area, with single houses, as you have today, and at the same time bring the houses in that area down to the level of practically the poorest people in that district. In a new section of Utica I found that you could go far beyond that and rent single houses for \$6.50 per month, built of brick, under local conditions, housing as many people on that land as with the three- or four-family houses which they have in Utica. So I would like to have the Conference consider the matter further, studying out the possibilities, and see if something cannot be done to check the construction of the three-family houses of the worst kind.

# MR. R. A. POPE, New York City:

I believe that on the question of depth of lots for houses we have gone on the wrong principle. We have taken the lot and then put a house on it. I believe we should take the house unit and then determine the size of the lot. We can talk about the maximum limit being one hundred feet in depth and the minimum sixty-five feet, but in Boston we find dwelling-houses with only twenty feet in the rear of the house. In the front of the house we have perhaps fifteen or twenty feet more, which is for the garden of the house. The purpose of a deep lot, of course, is to keep the rear of the houses far apart. I think there could be some saving by having a common playground in the rear.

# Mr. H. J. Kellaway, Newton Centre, Mass.:

I think the paper read by the gentleman from Worcester is one of the best I have heard for a long while, because it interests the people most vitally. If you give people plenty of light, air, and room on their own lots, they will agree with you, but if you talk about streets, red lines on paper, and different schemes, you will not interest them. If you speak about giving a man a home, he will be ready to talk

to you every time and put his hand in his pocket for streets to get to his lot, and he doesn't want a little lot, just a few feet at his front or back door, either. He wants room to plant something and he wants room for his children to move around, and he wants room in front to have respectable surroundings. This crowding of houses on lots with interior and exterior arrangements, with allevs and that sort of thing, is all right perhaps for England, but it is not necessary in this country. We have plenty of land here, and we don't have to resort to that sort of thing. The trouble is that we are figuring on foot prices for land, seeing how much money we can get in return for a piece of land, instead of figuring how much benefit a man can get out of his surroundings. I think we shall get a great deal farther if, instead of figuring entirely in dollars and cents, we figure on humanity and health.

# MR. W. F. BURDETT, St. John, N. B .:

I would not take the liberty of addressing you had it not been for the remark made by Mr. Fox, of Utica, who has just sat down. I am speaking from experience when I say that I wish a body of this kind would condemn the old, worn-out system which has prevailed in England in the way of housing the poor, that is, the court system. That is what I would term the system proposed or suggested by Mr. Fox, where you would have an interior passage. I had experience with it when I lived in Liverpool a good many years ago, as a boy, and I have had a horror ever since of that system of housing poor people. We have plenty of land. If a city cannot accommodate its citizens with comfortable places to live in, whatever their positions in life, then it is better that those people should build elsewhere. We are not living here altogether for dollars; we are living here to be comfortable. Without proper houses for the working people you will not have comfort, contentment, or progress in your community. I would simply say to persons who may think it well for the interest of the

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community from an economic point of view to adopt the court system, that I hope they will carefully consider it before doing so.

MR. G. S. WEBSTER, Philadelphia, Pa.:

In the city of Philadelphia we have had some experience with this sort of thing, as far as passage-ways are concerned. Prior to 1855 it was the custom to construct interior courts — that is, to develop the interior of the block in that way, having a passage-way leading from the main street, a narrow passage-way. The result of that class of development was that slums grew up, breeding places for vice, and created very dangerous conditions in time of serious conflagrations. Our experience compelled us by law to restrict that sort of thing, and today such construction is positively prohibited.

# PRACTICAL VERSUS IDEAL CITY PLANNING

#### Mr. Amos L. Schaeffer

Consulting Engineer to the Borough of the Bronx, N. Y.

THE laws and other restrictions of the communities from which the members of the Conference come must necessarily differ in a great many respects, and if the theories advanced are not based on the laws of the community they can scarcely help being influenced, at least to some extent, by them, or else they are based on ideal laws such as should exist to bring about the best results in city planning. For instance, The Housing and Town Planning Act, passed in England in 1909, possibly enables English city planners to work on broader and more effective lines than those of any other country. Any theories or plans proposed, therefore, by Englishmen are naturally based on The Housing and Town Planning Act. American cities are not so fortunate as to have a statute which gives as broad powers as the Housing and Town Planning Act, and therefore they cannot plan on the same broad lines. This criticism is not made with the belief that conferences like the present should not advocate city planning under ideal conditions. It is one of its first duties to wage a campaign of education with the idea that proper legislation will finally be obtained to bring about the desired authority. Until such legislation is obtained, however, the best use must be made of existing laws and conditions.

The problems which the city planner is required to solve, as a rule, are not the laying out of a new town site, but the readjusting of an old one, which grew up with little or no thought of what its future size, influence, or importance

in the community might be. The rapidity with which some cities grow requires the frequent extension of their limits, thereby bringing under the central city control suburban villages which grew up in a more or less haphazard way without any thought of eventually becoming a part of the greater adjoining city. It can readily be seen, therefore, that the street system of the newly incorporated village will not coincide with the extension of the city streets; if it does, it is only by chance. In order to lay out a proper street system, the arterial highways, at least, must be extended through these suburban villages, even if the location of the subsidiary streets remains unchanged. These arterial highways need not be extended in a straight line, only a general direction needs to be maintained, and whenever possible they should be located so as to include within their lines the bed of existing streets. In nearly every case, however, it is necessary to widen the existing streets and to change their grades. This is true not only of the arterial highways, but of the entire street system.

In some cities where the development tends towards private residences and where these are set well back from the street lines, the widening of the street is not so urgent and not so difficult when it does become necessary. But it will be but a comparatively short time when the construction of apartment houses will predominate in all boroughs of New York City. The time is so near at hand as to make it necessary to lay out streets for residential purposes at a width sufficient to give proper light, air, and access for apartment houses. The lower grade of apartment house is usually six stories in height. The minimum width of street for six-story buildings should be sixty feet; the average width of streets in suburban villages is from forty to fifty feet. In order to provide for the kind of building development which may be expected, all subsidiary streets should be widened to sixty feet and arterial streets to such greater widths as may be required to accommodate traffic.

Each individual house is usually provided with a cesspool

to take care of its drainage, which has to be abandoned as soon as these villages become subject to the more severe sanitary regulations of the city. A change of street grades therefore frequently becomes necessary in order to include the new territory in the general drainage system. In order to derive the greatest ultimate economy these changes in street lines and grades should be made before any further building development takes place, so that the amount of damage to the buildings due to these changes will not be unnecessarily increased.

The laws governing the acquisition of land for public purposes in the city of New York provide that there shall be assessed against each piece of property not more than one half of its fair value, and by this is meant the fair value of the property prior to its enhancement due to the improvement the cost of which it is proposed to assess. The valuation of property in these sections is frequently so low that it is impossible to levy sufficient assessment to carry out any improvements whatsoever. There are other cases where the property has just sufficient value to bear the assessment. In these cases it frequently happens that the acquiring of title, the grading and the construction of sewers and pavements, follow each other so closely that the last improvement is completed before the assessment for the first has been paid. In such cases the amount of the assessments levied against the property practically amounts to confiscation. It should be stated here that the statutory limitation to levy an assessment of only one half the fair value of property applies to a single improvement, and may be repeated as many times as there are different improvements.

It is seen, therefore, that even though proper city planning has been done, it is impossible to carry out these plans, either because of insufficient value of the property benefited to pay for the improvement, or because the carrying out of the plan will confiscate the property where it has just sufficient value to bear the assessment.

Some of the conditions which exist, therefore, in the suburbs of our large cities are due not so much to the indifference of the city planner as to his inability to carry out his plans. It becomes necessary, therefore, to permit the further development of some sections on manifestly improper lines until such time as a proper development may be undertaken even at greater cost.

An attempt has been made in the short time allotted to show that some of the poor features of our cities are due not so much to bad city planning as to the inability of the city planner to carry out a correct plan because of legal and other restrictions.

#### DISCUSSION

MR. VINCENT S. STEVENS, Akron, Ohio:

A long step from ideal plans to the accomplishing of practical results will be taken if the technical experts, the idealists, and the dreamers of dreams would only ally themselves with the practical business men, farmers, and boards of trade throughout the country. This is the kind of alliance we are trying to bring about in Akron. The Chamber of Commerce, with a membership of twelve hundred, is the city planning agency and is accomplishing results. It is coöperating with the City Government in the consideration of plans for the construction of a \$3,000,000 water works plant, and with the City Council is working out a civic group plan to include a city hall, armory, court house, and other city buildings. I want simply to leave this practical suggestion with you.

# POPULARIZING THE CITY PLANNING PRINCIPLE

THE discussion of this topic was participated in by several members of the Conference.

MR. GEORGE B. FORD, New York City:

It is one thing to study the various technical essentials of plan making; it is another thing to consider the necessary legislation under which city planning will be put into effect, and it is a quite different thing, a thing of great importance, to decide how particular plans, or, in fact, the whole subject matter of city planning, shall be submitted to the people for their support. In the four Conferences on City Planning the methods of getting plans before the people or conducting a campaign for city planning have not been sufficiently considered. I believe that one of the most effective things that the City Planning Conference can do is to study and suggest the best methods of getting public support which will insure the execution of the plan. I see a number of people present who have had experience in attempting to arouse interest in the people and others who are here anxious to start city planning campaigns. Each ought to learn from the other. It seems to me the Conference might well devote a large amount of time to this question of education and that subsequent conferences might do so. It might be desirable to work out a program for work along the line of publicity, showing how to extend the usefulness of the Conference between the annual meetings by bringing this matter before the people interested in city planning.

MRS. ROLLIN NORRIS, Ardmore, Pa.:

That is right in line with what we want very much down in the suburbs of Philadelphia. Last year there was a conference for a whole month in Philadelphia on township planning. We sent copies of the program to town officials, and one of our town officials was telephoned to, asking if he would not like to attend the meeting. He said he was not interested. Since then we have said to town officials. "We are especially interested in housing and planning. We know that you are busy men. We think the officials of the towns and the people should be partners in the business. Those of us who are interested in the subject and who have the time are willing to devote ourselves to it and would be very glad indeed to do the work, and then have the privilege of your cooperation with us." Under these circumstances officials of towns within twentyfive miles of Philadelphia have been very willing to cooperate with us.

There is a certain fear among the towns about Pennsylvania that we must dissipate. They are interested in combining for more effective town planning, but they have been afraid of Philadelphia swamping them. Their education is necessary, and for their education we need tremendously campaign literature.

Two or three township officials who have been asked to introduce resolutions later in regard to building regulations have said to me, "That is all right for you people who are specially interested in housing and town planning. You know just what you want. But we are just beginning to consider the plan. We want to do what we can, but we do not want to commit ourselves by introducing resolutions and agreeing to resolutions unless we know a little more about where it is going to lead."

We could use particularly a pamphlet showing what is being done throughout the country in the way of regulating the number of houses per acre according to the dis-

tance from the center of population, and this pamphlet would be only one of many that are needed.

MR. W. F. GLEASON, Philadelphia, Pa.:

I merely wanted to state what our experience had been in Philadelphia in the matter of publicity. About four or five years ago, when the movement was begun in Philadelphia along comprehensive lines, the newspapers looked upon it askance. The very men who were possessed of the greatest amount of intelligence and who would be supposed to grasp the situation and see visions of what a future Philadelphia might be, did not realize it. That can be best shown by a story that was related to me by a newspaper reporter in Philadelphia. He said when the plans were first prepared he took them up to the city editor of his paper, and the city editor said, "Bah! They are dreams! We don't want them; we can't print anything like that." Then he went to the managing editor. Well, the managing editor said there might be something in it, that it might be all right for the Sunday supplement. So the story was written telling what the plans were and what the great Philadelphia of the future might be. But they would n't publish the plans. The reporter argued with the editor of the paper for nearly a month or six weeks to get the plans in the paper. Finally they were published, and the paper today is proud of the fact that it was the first journal in Philadelphia to announce the comprehensive plans. Our committee is now planning to send lecturers out to the different organizations giving illustrations of all phases of municipal activities and of departmental problems. Interspersed among the lectures will be references to city planning and what it means in the administration of all the departments.

MR. JOHN NOLEN, Cambridge, Mass.:

This subject of publicity is, of course, a very important one, and I suppose we should decide whether the Conference

is really in a position to promote publicity. Assuming for a moment that the Conference is in sympathy with the idea, we then come to the fact that the making of public opinion for city planning is like making public opinion for pretty much anything else. It is done by agitation. by the newspapers, by public meetings, and particularly in this field by exhibitions. An important thing to discuss in the different communities is the financial end - that city planning in a big sense pays. That might be the first appeal. Such arguments as were set forth in yesterday morning's discussion, in relation to the execution of city plans, might be stated. The second appeal is an opposite appeal, the appeal to sentiment. It is surprising, when you get before boards of trade, chambers of commerce, and practical business bodies, to find the response you get simply on the ground that city planning promotes the city's welfare. The third appeal is to the imagination through prepared plans which will visualize the kind of thing that may be done in transforming conditions from what they are to what they may be. The fourth appeal is by the doing of a little bit of concrete city planning as an illustration of what city planning definitely means.

# MR. G. D. GALLUP, Boston, Mass.:

There are two things in connection with publicity that have not been mentioned. Those connected with this movement in the cities of New England have found it desirable to show manufacturers the advantages to them of a city plan. Then there is the social standpoint to be considered. I have not heard very much in this Conference about the social phase of city planning. I expected to hear a great deal. There are, I believe, about thirty thousand men, in Boston, connected with church organizations, men's clubs, and the like, interested in doing something practical along the social side, and city planning seems to present a means of effective work for those organizations. There are also the women's clubs, very powerful in this section, many

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of which would be glad to do work along the line of social service and also proper publicity methods, if the social value of city planning were emphasized. I should be very glad to see this organization bring about the creation of a Committee on Publicity that would take up that whole subject, just as chambers of commerce and other organizations today are establishing publicity committees to take up the question of securing certain advantages for certain communities. What we are driving at is the advantage of the whole community. If we could get in the city of Boston thirty thousand or fifty thousand people interested in this question from the public standpoint, we would have an influential body of opinion for the support of necessary legislation or for the execution of desirable public improvements.

The general discussion was participated in by Mr. G. W. Lemon of Calgary, Mr. W. W. Emmett of Baltimore, Hon. F. C. Howe, Mr. John Nolen, Mr. W. B. Stevens of St. Louis, and Mr. G. D. Seymour of New Haven, at the close of which the following resolutions were passed by the Conference:

Voted, that the thanks of the Conference be expressed to the members contributing to the fund to be used for the purpose of popularizing city planning and particularly to Mrs. Norris and ex-Mayor Reyburn for their generous contributions.

Voted, that the Executive Committee be requested to consider the advisability of the creation of a special committee to finance the popularizing of city planning.

# THE CONTROL OF MUNICIPAL DEVELOP-MENT BY THE "ZONE SYSTEM" AND ITS APPLICATION IN THE UNITED STATES

#### MR. B. ANTRIM HALDEMAN

Assistant Engineer, Bureau of Surveys, Phila.

THERE appears to be much reluctance on the part of municipal authorities in the United States to actively undertake the solution of some of the civic and social problems that have assumed large proportions and great importance in the swift evolution of our cities. These problems involve, to some extent, the regulation of the privileges of the individual and of industrial and commercial enterprises in their relations with the general public. To such an extent has the American citizen exercised his freedom to do as he pleases, and particularly to do as he pleases with his own property, regardless of public rights, that some form of public control of that freedom seems inevitable if the larger rights of the people are to be preserved. The discussion of such problems, the arousing of public interest in them, and whatever tangible progress toward their solution has been made are almost entirely due to the initiative and persistent energy of citizen organizations. must be apparent to the most obtuse and unwilling observer, however, judging from the drift of large events in recent years, that the regulation of the use of property, and of private and corporate enterprises that closely affect the well-being of all the people, is coming to be an issue of vital importance to modern progress.

The necessity for limiting the right of the individual to do as he pleases has arisen from the exploitation of the

property and rights of the public by private interests, and from the exigencies attending the intensive growth of great cities. Modern methods of big business are forcing a gradually widening control and regulation of trade, and man's inhumanity to man is forcing the police and health authorities to take measures to prevent man's destruction of man.

From the points of vantage that have already been gained by those who believe in some form of public control and regulation of those individual and corporate activities which have a direct bearing upon the welfare of the community at large, it may seem but a comparatively short step to the public control and regulation of land and the uses to which it may be put. We have already seen the exercise of such authority to a limited extent in the declaration that certain industries are nuisances and may not be engaged in in certain localities; also in the limiting of the height of buildings and the requirement of open spaces attached to dwellings.

Some of the nations of Europe, out of a wealth of unfortunate experiences in the rapid growth of industrial cities and the crowding together of the people in them, have evolved what is known as the "zone system" for controlling the use and occupation of land. The members of this Conference, and all persons actively interested in town planning and housing, are no doubt familiar with this system, but for the benefit of the layman who may be reached through the Conference or its published Proceedings and whose interest and support we wish to enlist, a brief description of its origin, purpose, and accomplishment may not be out of place.

The system had its origin through the deplorable living conditions which were forced upon the working people and poorer classes of Germany during the period of industrial progress that has absorbed the energy of the German people since the Franco-Prussian war, and during which old feudal towns have been transformed into metropolitan

cities and the countryside into a forest of factory stacks. The administrative machinery of the towns, confronted with new and perplexing problems due to the rapid increase of population, was for many years unable to cope successfully with the new conditions by reason of the manner in which land was held, its sudden rise in value, and the lack of any authority to interfere in any effective manner with the owner's disposition and use of it.

The swift progress of industrialism throughout the German states encouraged the rapid growth of industrial towns at a time when the social conditions and the manner of living of the common people were not conducive to either the morals or the health of crowded communities. The workshop and factory drew upon the farm and rural hamlet for their labor, and the working people, unable to obtain proper dwelling places, herded in caves, cellars, and unsanitary buildings, like rabbits in a warren. The rapid increase of urban population offered a fertile field for exploitation by the great land owners who erected barrack dwellings of many stories and rooms which were an improvement over the caves and cellars and into which the working people crowded. Although these dwellings marked much improvement in living conditions, they still bred many evils from the too intensive occupation, and to correct these and provide greater assurance of the public health and safety a multiplicity of building regulations were enacted by the municipal authorities.

Ministerial decrees were issued tending to enlarge the authority of local councils in matters relating to the erection and occupancy of dwellings. Gradually the fact dawned upon the law-makers that the power and prestige of the empire among the nations of the earth depended as vitally upon the health and efficiency of its working people as upon the courage and loyalty of its fighting men. By slow degrees, slow because opposed by the great land owners who dominated many of the legislative bodies, the ministerial decrees were enacted into laws granting broad

autonomy to municipalities and enabling them to strike at the root of the evil of their housing system by checking the increase of the speculative value of land, such speculative increase in some cities having risen four hundred per cent in a single year. Municipalities were also authorized to purchase ground, to erect dwellings, and to loan public funds to societies for the erection of workmen's homes. Much encouragement has been given to the erection of one-family houses, and home-owning has been made possible among the working people.

The story of the industrial and social evolution of Germany is an intensely absorbing one, but we can consider here, and that but briefly, only the manner in which the municipal authorities exercise the powers vested in them to regulate the development of private property. This is accomplished mainly through the employment of the "zone system," under which the municipal department having charge of the city planning, in establishing and extending the street system, also establishes the building lines, determines what percentage of the property may be built over, and the arrangement of the buildings themselves, whether they shall be erected in solid rows, in pairs, or singly, and the distance between the buildings when built singly or in pairs, and the number of floors or stories. No appeal from the established regulations can be taken after the plans have been completed, examined, and finally approved by the several independent committees having jurisdiction. The plans frequently show three fixed lines in a block — the line to which the street is to be opened and improved, a line of restriction a certain distance from the street line beyond which no building is allowed to extend. and an interior line fixing the boundary of the courtyard or garden within which no structure is permitted.

The term "zone" as applied to the system is somewhat of a misnomer and misleading. Although the general theory under which it is applied is that the buildings should be lower and farther apart the greater their distance is from

the center of the city, the arrangement is not one of concentric girdles, as might be supposed, but a division into districts, irregular as to area and boundary and regulated in accordance with some local characteristic or special adaptability for certain classes of buildings; in fact, it sometimes occurs that a "zone" consists of a single city block, or even part of a block. True zones girdling the city would result in alternating rings of high and low buildings or a single indeterminate outer zone, regardless of topography or local conditions, and are considered unwise, if not impractical; so also are very large zones, or districts, since the application of absolute restrictions would prevent the establishment of local business and trade centers for the convenience of the people.

The system has undergone considerable modification since its introduction; keen judgment and great care are essential in determining boundaries and in imposing regulations which will permit property to be used for the purpose for which it is best adapted. Although there was, and still is, considerable opposition to it in some instances, it is gradually producing the desired results, checking land speculation and inflation of values, discouraging the erection of barrack dwellings, encouraging the erection of one-family houses, and making it possible for people of modest means to own their own homes.

Thus we find that within the span of about a quarter of a century the industrial classes of Germany have been translated from hovels and dens reeking with disease, degeneracy, and vice, to pleasant homes, surrounded with all the comforts, conveniences, and privileges that make for health, happiness, and good citizenship; and this has been accomplished mainly by breaching the one-time sacred wall of vested rights and establishing the principle that the economic progress of the nation and the integrity of its social fabric transcend the prerogative of the individual.

Since the system has been productive of beneficent results abroad, let us endeavor to determine whether conditions

in the United States are such as to justify an effort to apply it here. At first thought it seems full of promise, but many of our cities have been founded and are becoming great with such a broad and enlightened conception of the advantages and amenities of the distinctive home life of America that the advisability of urging such control of land development will depend upon the necessity for the protection it insures, upon the influence of healthy public sentiment to curb familiar evils and abuses, and the extent to which those who are responsible for the development of property, as owners or promoters, are amenable to less arbitrary forms of regulation.

The natural ambition of the American citizen is to be the owner of his home, whereas home-owning is a comparatively new and strange experience to the European. This ambition, properly encouraged and aided by civic organization and the municipal authorities, should be of great assistance in curbing the tendency apparent in many cities to drift toward apartments and tenements.

Just as the industrialism and commercialism of Europe have created congestion and bad housing conditions, so are the same evils following in the wake of the tremendous activity along industrial lines in this country. The centralization of trade and the lack of adequate transportation facilities are, perhaps, the most powerful factors in producing a too intensive occupation and use of land. The desire to make property produce the largest possible income is a characteristic of landlords the world over, and tenement houses under lax regulations are splendid revenue producers.

The conservation of the health of the people is one of the most vital purposes of modern, progressive town planning, and in no place can health be better or more easily conserved than in the home. The influence of the home, its amenities, associations, and surroundings, inevitably mould the character of the citizen for good or ill. The ownership of his home gives to the citizen the pride of partnership

in the prosperity of the community and its institutions, and any measure of proven efficiency for multiplying the number of home owners should command the public support, even though it may reduce the flow of speculative dollars into the pockets of the landlords.

Although the zone system as employed in Europe is the outgrowth of a long and persistently fought battle for the improvement of housing conditions, it has resulted in other economic and administrative reforms, and it is along these lines that its application in the United States might also produce important results and be of great benefit. It would enable the municipal authorities to predetermine the character of improvement in any given area and, as the permanence of the improvement would be assured, very large economies in the planning of streets, the construction of public works, and the conducting of the general public service could be effected.

One serious defect in American methods is the lack of stability and permanence in improvements of all kinds. Temporary and makeshift structures are erected to serve until such time as the character of the improvement in a neighborhood may be determined or until such improvement shall greatly enhance the value of property. Sometimes a district will undergo such a transformation as to necessitate radical and costly changes in buildings, streets, and public works which would otherwise be permanent.

Under the zone system the permanent population of any given area may be determined with a reasonable degree of accuracy before a single building is erected upon it. With this factor known it is possible to intelligently forecast the needs of the district for every class of public works and public service and to plan accordingly, with the confidence that whatever is done will be done properly, permanently, and economically.

Transportation is the great, controlling factor in the growth and development of the modern city, and the most difficult problem municipalities are called upon to solve.

Its difficulties would be greatly lessened if the density of population could be kept within reasonably certain limits. This is understood in the German system of town planning and the locations of the trams, or street railway lines, are determined as the street system is extended, and are based upon the volume of traffic likely to be created by the known population and the predetermined character of the territory they will serve. The same is true of main, or trunk, lines of every kind of underground service - sewers, water pipe, electrical lines, pneumatic tubes; and subways, pipes, and tubes for every purpose of subterranean transportation. The number and capacity of public service structures under, upon, or above the surface depends upon the density of the population and the local needs of the community: these elements being known, the original construction of public works can be of the most permanent character and the liability for repairs, reconstruction, and enlargement can be reduced to a minimum.

Wide streets, planned with the almost certain knowledge the zone system would give of the traffic requirements for long years of service, would permit of a far more economical system of secondary and residential streets than we now find in most of our cities. In almost every city we find large areas laid out with streets of uniform width and uniform improvement, but they seldom carry an equal amount of traffic or are of equal public use except in congested localities. Certain ones, by reason of easier grades, better connections with important points, greater business activity, or other favorable local conditions, attract the greater volume of travel, leaving perhaps half a dozen adjacent ones unused and unlovely expanses of costly pavement.

The zone system would permit property to be restricted to the use for which it is best adapted by natural conditions. If hilly and picturesque districts were reserved for high-class residences, or for residences requiring lawns or gardens, the cost of improvement, both as to property

and streets, would be greatly reduced by removing the necessity for the usual formal street system and the great amount of grading required for the building of solid rows of houses on small lots. Instances have occurred in Philadelphia where the street system had been established with due regard for topographical conditions and with a view of encouraging open development, but had to be changed and the rectangular system substituted in order to permit owners to build solid rows of small houses, the cost of grading the sites being, of course, added to the price of the houses and paid by the home buyers. Moderate priced single or double houses might have been built, if such regulations could have been enforced, without detriment to any interest except, possibly, that of the real estate speculator or the operative builder.

It also frequently occurs that a quiet and attractive neighborhood that has been occupied for many years by the better class of residences, surrounded by well-kept grounds, is invaded by rows of cheap houses, the character of the neighborhood enabling the builder to realize large profits. Since these profits are generally the sole object of the builder, the operation seldom fits harmoniously into the surroundings, and almost invariably the result is that the character of the neighborhood changes and property loses some of its desirability and value, except for the erection of more rows of houses. Operation houses are usually built for sale rather than for stability, and if their erection was confined to certain districts there would be a competition among builders that would result in a higher class of workmanship, more attractive arrangement and surroundings, and better value for the purchaser of a home.

In many of the towns of the Middle West and West, where the one-family house, set back from the street and surrounded by ample open space, has been the almost invariable type of dwelling, the rapid growth of recent years has encouraged the introduction of large apartment and tenement houses. These have been set down in residential

neighborhoods, close to the street line, rearing their many stories high above all surroundings, obtruding themselves into fine vistas, cutting off the view from adjacent residences, and destroying the dignity and charm of handsome, tree-lined streets. Proper restrictions, confining such structures within designated areas, would result in greater beauty and symmetry in the growth of the city and would prevent the incongruous mingling of totally different types of buildings.

The sky-scraper, as an institution of the business life of America, is a costly luxury for which the public pays. and will continue to pay in ratio increasing with its growth, a heavy price in both cash and health. It increases enormously the difficult problem of transportation, and with its brother evils, the subway and the tenement house, for both of which it is partly responsible, it is moving steadily toward the creation of an abnormal condition of urban life under which the city dweller will arise in the morning, enter the subway through a subterranean passage, be hurled to his office through an underground tube, toil all day under artificial light, and return to his apartment at night without having known the caress of the sunshine, the smile of the blue sky, the breath of the fresh air of heaven, or anything of nature's wide beneficence - a condition having a tendency to lower the human race to the level of the mole, the woodchuck, and the angle worm. The sky-scraper, eminently respectable as it now seems to be, may ultimately be a greater menace to the health of mankind than the slum, for it will strike at the vitality of every class, from the highest to the lowest. This menace of the sky-scraper, the subway, and the tenement can only be removed by the enactment and enforcement of regulations limiting the height of buildings, defining the areas within which those of maximum height may be erected, and prescribing the percentage of surface area they may cover and the amount of light and air space around them.

In no department of city building is there a larger opportunity for the advantageous application of the zone

system than in the defining of the areas within which industrial establishments may be erected. Mills, factories, and workshops of almost any kind may now be set down in any locality which seems favorable to the promoter of the enterprise. Such establishments must invariably have facilities for transportation by rail or water, or both, especially if they are conducted upon a large scale, as most modern establishments are. Their random placing may work to the disadvantage of an entire neighborhood. There is a large economy for any concern in having transportation companies deliver and receive freights directly at its doors, and the problem of supplying such service is a difficult and complicated one where industrial plants are distributed widely throughout a community. In Philadelphia, which is distinctively a manufacturing city, there are constant requests for permission to lay sidings at grade along or across important streets to effect connections with railroads. To refuse such permission is to lay the municipal authorities open to the charge of discouraging the business of the city, and to grant it means the blocking of general traffic by cars crossing the streets or standing upon them while being loaded or unloaded.

The confinement of industrial establishments within certain prescribed areas would protect residential districts from invasion by incongruous or otherwise objectional institutions and would immeasurably simplify the problem of industrial transportation, both local and foreign. The creation of factory zones in locations conveniently reached by rail or water would permit the development of terminals of maximum efficiency at minimum cost. Drayage between the mill and the shipping station is a large item of expense to the manufacturer, and the collection, classification, and distribution of freights from or for scattered and isolated yards are distracting problems for the traffic manager and the yard master. The short haul, the reduction or concentration of trackage, and the saving of time and energy where freights originate or are distributed within certain

prescribed areas, all count for economy in trade and transportation. Main traffic streets for through travel could be kept clear from obstruction by railroad crossings and sidings, and to a considerable extent from costly bridges, if freight yards and freight-carrying lines were kept within the industrial zones.

So apparent do the advantages of the industrial zone seem, and so complex and costly are the problems of industrial transportation under present methods, that it is strange the manufacturers and transportation companies, in their efforts toward scientific and economic management, have not used their influence to establish such a system. Indeed, some of the large industrial concerns have found such an arrangement so desirable that they have established their own industrial colonies in which their factories and freight service are entirely separated from the residential sections. Only the most extensive ones, however, have been able to do this successfully, the smaller ones having found the problem of obtaining and keeping skilled labor a difficult one in colonies a considerable distance from large towns.

Many large industrial establishments are removing from the cities on account of the high price of land and the consequent difficulty and cost of expanding and taking care of increasing business. This exodus is a serious menace to the progress and prosperity of manufacturing communities, and might be effectually halted if the municipal authorities could set aside certain areas for manufacturing and establish such other regulations as would tend to keep land values within reasonable limits for such purposes.

If this Conference, or any other civic organization, or any considerable number of our people, should agree that large benefits would accrue from the adoption of the zone system in the development of our cities, there would still remain a difficult task and a long campaign to overcome the opposition of powerful property interests and to obtain the necessary legislation to establish it as one of the funda-

mental elements of modern city planning, and in this connection several important questions immediately suggest themselves.

First. Is it necessary, or even advisable, that such a system be established or advocated at the present time?

The claim that it is necessary cannot hold if the objects it is intended to accomplish can be achieved in an easier and less disturbing manner. That its accomplishments in German practice have been generally beneficial cannot be denied, and the very fact that we are considering it seriously is convincing evidence that we believe it possesses some merit. It will not do to say that we do not need it at present; that is a half-hearted way of approaching the problem. Although present conditions are largely responsible for the organization of this Conference and our energies are being directed toward the improvement of civic processes and the removal of obstacles to civic progress as they now exist, our largest field of usefulness will lie in the keenness of our prophetic vision and the skill and wisdom with which we may direct the course of civic progress toward higher and nobler ends in the future. Therefore, if, through the vista of the coming years we see that public control of the occupancy and use of land in the interest of the people is inevitable, now is the time to inculcate the principle rather than to postpone action until the difficulties the zone system is intended to overcome have become too great to be readily uprooted. Let the lesson of the sky-scraper teach us to anticipate and prevent the growth of its brother evils.

Second. Would not the attempt to establish the system in this country be regarded as an unwarranted invasion of vested property rights incompatible with the American idea of freedom?

Any attempt to engraft the system into our schemes of municipal development would probably meet with great opposition from land owners, real estate operators, and operative builders, and from large interests not directly

concerned in the development of land. The objections of the first would doubtless be based upon the abridgment of their right to do as they please with their own property; of the second, upon the cutting off of prospective profits; and of the third, upon the general proposition of the invasion of vested rights. All of these arguments were advanced against the establishment of the system in Germany, and all had to give way at the behest of the people.

In this country, or in some of the states at least, land owners place perpetual restrictions upon property, prohibiting all succeeding grantees from improving it except in a certain prescribed manner. They establish a permanent building line beyond which no building may extend, fix the minimum cost of the house to be erected, and prohibit certain buildings and the carrying on of certain kinds of business. If it is within the power of an individual, during his brief enjoyment of ownership, to place a restriction upon land which shall be binding upon unborn generations, it should be placed within the province of the public authorities, representing the whole people and acting for their common good, to impose similar restrictions.

The curtailment of the prospective profits of the real estate speculator and the operative builder, whose interest in land seldom amounts to bona fide ownership, may not seem a serious obstacle, but instances are not wanting in which it has been used with telling effect.

The plea for the protection of the vested right has not the force it had a few years ago. The great unrest we find throughout the country today may readily be traced to the exploitation of nearly every line of activity under so-called vested rights; the days of perpetual franchises and special privileges are passing away, and, while every reasonable safeguard must be maintained around the rights of property and invested capital, their leveling down to the service of the people who have given property its value and capital its reward is proceeding steadily.

Third. Is the organism of our municipal governments

sufficiently stable to administer such a trust with exact justice and continuing firmness?

A long process of reasoning might be necessary to convince the people that our municipal officers may be trusted with such large powers as are involved in the practical application of the system, for there are too well-founded suspicions that public service does not always mean serving the public. But the administrative machinery of our cities is passing from the control of political machines and corporation influences to the control of enlightened public sentiment. The people have been thinking and inquiring into public affairs, and they are learning that the city, with all its vast resources and wealth, is theirs, created by their energy and labor. They are learning what a tremendous organization the modern city is and, in the pride of their own work as its creators, are beginning to assert their right to rule it. Municipal government in the United States is undergoing an evolution that points toward material improvement, and the time may not be far distant when our cities will be governed as wisely and honestly as those of Germany, where the power of the local officials is so great, and so unrestrained by constitutional or statute laws, that only the most capable and trustworthy men dare be placed in the public service, and where election to a public office is a real honor, the greatest that can be conferred upon a citizen.

Fourth. Cannot the undeniable benefits the system has conferred upon foreign cities be obtained by other means and under our present laws?

It may be entirely possible to obtain many of the benefits claimed for the system by other methods and with the legal instruments we now have at hand, but it will require wise, forceful, and courageous officials whose tenure of office is not subject to the vagaries of party politics or the influence of selfish interests and who shall enjoy the confidence and support of the people. Accomplishment will be by slow degrees, and some enabling legislation will be

required in any event. The many associations of a national or local character that have been organized to carry on the work of social and civic improvement can exercise a large influence in encouraging progressive thought and action among municipal authorities and the people, and in bringing about harmony and coöperation in matters affecting the public welfare as well as in the large constructive measures essential to the substantial and permanent development of the modern city.

#### DISCUSSION

HON. JOHN E. REYBURN, Philadelphia, Pa.:

In listening to the thoughtful paper of Mr. Haldeman, I am struck again with the advantage that Philadelphia has in the matter of city planning. As mayor, I was surrounded by a class of men who were deeply interested in their work. Success in city planning was made possible because we started it after much consideration and removed from it all thought of partisanship. Our first meeting was composed of citizens of all classes representing the leading industries and thought in the city. In that way we removed from the undertaking all charge of partisanship and politics. In all the four years that city planning was considered there was never a charge that it was originated for partisan purposes. The entire city and all classes of citizens were considered. It was truly a comprehensive undertaking.

One other thought occurs to me. If the idea contained in Mr. Haldeman's paper or, in fact, if any of the fundamental city planning ideas are to be carried out, it will have to be done by downright energy and no halting at imaginary or real obstacles. If the plans we now have at Philadelphia could have been halted by raising financial considerations as an insurmountable obstacle, they would have been stopped, but we paid no attention to all the things that were said about the lack of money. We

believed that it was capable of demonstration that the money expended would bring back a tenfold return. I personally believe that if a company were organized in the city of Philadelphia to develop some of the avenues for which we have plans, it would return a very handsome profit to its stockholders, if it were allowed to take its pay in a certain percentage of the taxes based on the increased value due to the improvement.

From the viewpoint of both city and private interest I believe in the commercial advantages of city planning. Its esthetic advantages need no re-statement.

# MR. C. F. PUFF, JR., Newark, N. J.:

Mr. Haldeman has brought out two valuable points in his paper which I think will bear emphasizing, namely, reluctance of municipal authorities to adopt new ideas and the query "How best can we obtain results?" The first point, to my mind, is probably the most important. It is here that ideas are either crystallized or crushed, and therefore it is necessary to study this point and find a remedy. No official cares to make radical departures from his set policies, and these policies are built on the theory of "don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you." It is just this indecision and hesitancy which give rise to doubts in the minds of the people, and instead of moulding opinion officials are subservient to opinions founded perhaps through ignorance of the true purpose. To feel the pulse of the public is indeed diplomatic, but to stimulate that pulse is what inspires confidence and insures success. This is what we need and this is what we have in some of our progressive cities. All depends on the presentation of a new idea and who favor it, and I urge our officials to become not only acquainted but close allies with measures which have demonstrated their practicability.

The query as to how best we can obtain results suggests Mr. Haldeman's hint of some indirect means, some means other than the zoning system. Zoning legisla-

tion will no doubt be fought strenuously and perhaps defeated. The street plan, special taxation and assessments, building codes and health regulations, all offer indirect means, but to apply even these intelligently we must zone the city. Fire zones, police zones, postal zones, etc., have been established; the tenement sections or zones have certain limited heights of buildings and certain areas of lots to be left unbuilt up; residential sections or zones have restrictions as to amount of lot to be left unoccupied and distance back from the street line to be preserved. Now, in view of these existing indirect zoning laws, why not add some of the building laws in force in Frankfort-on-the-Main? These laws regulate the ratio of height of building to width of street, also the ratio of house area to lot area, etc. Then they impose stringent rules for placing a factory in a residential section and just as stringent rules for placing a dwelling in a factory section. In just such manner we could arrange our building code so as to make it unprofitable to establish either a factory in a residential section or vice versa, and we could thereby give protection to both, accomplish natural zones, and preserve the integrity of them.

These regulations, however, sometimes become a boomerang and drive industries out of the city unless that city can offer them a more advantageous site than the one made unprofitable by the building code. This is the trouble with all kinds of regulation. If we could offer factories and dwellings better opportunities than those they have at present, we would get natural zones without injury to private property. It is the indirect means of accomplishing our purpose that I wish to emphasize. Municipal authorities, instead of imposing regulations and restrictions, should establish industrial zones, made attractive by conditions under which the transfer of raw material and the finished product would be provided at the lowest cost. Acting on this idea, Newark, N. J., hopes to establish one of the greatest industrial zones in the world on

what is now waste land. The same municipal forethought and ingenuity which go into the establishment of zones calculated to attract industries can be employed with as great advantage to make attractive certain portions of the city for residence.

# Mr. W. T. Johnson:

The map which Mr. Haldeman showed of the city of Cologne suggested two thoughts which might be supplementary to his paper. The city of Cologne, so far as its city plan is concerned, is in charge of an architect who has a twelve-year term, and he is not a Cologne man, but is imported from another part of Germany, for the simple reason that he was the best man they could get. That is the system that they use in Germany. If a town wants a mayor, for instance, it advertises in the newspapers for one. This eminent architect has in charge the development of the plan of Cologne, and at the same time, at the end of his twelve-year term, the city of Cologne, if it wants to get rid of him, has to pay him a large forfeit, for the simple reason that it does not seem fair, if he has spent all of his twelve years in the development of Cologne, that he should be just turned down.

There is another point which is very interesting about the city of Cologne, and that is that in the building law certain limits are placed, as Mr. Haldeman explained, to buildings in certain zones, but if, for instance, in a zone where there are five-story buildings a man deliberately puts up a four-story building, he is allowed to have a certain rebate in his taxes, just for the reason that he has gone below the limit.

# REMARKS AT THE DINNER GIVEN BY THE BOSTON CITY CLUB

Presiding, MR. JAMES P. MUNROE, Vice-President of the City Club Toastmaster, MR. J. RANDOLPH COOLIDGE, JR., Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce.

HON. JOHN F. FITZGERALD, Mayor of Boston:

WHILE I have not been able to attend as many of the sessions of the City Planning Conference this year as I could have wished, yet I have kept in touch with the discussions and have in this way been enabled to follow the general trend. I think it is fair to say that while the spirit of the movement and the conceptions of its exponents have lost nothing in breadth and in fineness, there has been a tendency toward practical methods and the achievement of concrete results which is extremely gratifying.

The general theme of the Conference this year, with its emphasis on the financial and administrative sides, indicates that this group of idealists have come to the point when they realize the necessity of embodying their visions in definite achievements. I have been pleased, for example, to note the recognition given to the engineering profession. There is a notion, all too prevalent still, that city planning is purely a question of landscape architecture, but those of us who have had to do with the actual work of the government of cities realize that dependence must be placed upon the engineer for the laying out of subways, streets, sewers, and water systems, which are in a sense the skeleton over which this great organism is developed. The city governments themselves have recognized this, and while we may not have reached the position of Paris, which is said to have in its municipal departments the finest engineering

corps in the world, it is a fact that the cities of the United States perforce give recognition to some of the ablest members of this profession.

The tendency, moreover, to include in the conferences heads of city departments is encouraging to those of us who realize how practical and human this entire question is. From its very nature city planning must assume a somewhat critical attitude. It expresses a noble discontent; but it will defeat its own purpose if this criticism goes so far as to attach blame indiscriminately to the men who, hampered by difficulties of every sort, by legislative restrictions, and popular apathy, are seeking a way out and endeavoring to accomplish to the best of their ability the tasks that are assigned to them. There should be no attitude of superiority on the one side or of hostility on the other, but both sets of workers should labor side by side for a common end.

The presence of city officials as speakers and interested listeners at all of your sessions holds out a rainbow of hope for the future, since it is only through the absorption by the community of the ideas which the leaders of this movement have to communicate that there can ever be brought about even a partial realization of their dreams. Not only the city officials but the people themselves need education. This movement should be popularized by vigorous campaigning so that a higher conception of city life may be spread among the citizens. The press is another agency which can be a means of assistance in widening the basis of popular support which every such movement requires in a democratic country like ours. Only a month or so ago our attention was called to the remarkable development of the park system in Rochester, where I believe the first session of your conference was held, and we learned that this was due to the enthusiasm awakened among the people of that city largely through the efforts of the daily papers. There is no reason why the press of Boston, for example, should not display the same pride in

the achievements of our metropolitan and local park boards and guide the people to points of interest and beauty in the wonderful system which has been created here.

The idea which I wish to extricate from the multitude of suggestions which have been offered in the last three days, is simply this,—that we are working not for the purpose of ventilating our personal opinions or of sketching vaporous visions of a city beautiful, which is to be brought into being somewhere, somehow, at some future stage of the world's progress, but for the purpose of bettering conditions of life in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and wherever tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of men are living under conditions that are admittedly far from ideal. Results are what we want and we are willing to accept suggestions from any quarter that promises improvement.

From the European cities, for example, we can learn not only their searching methods of taxation, their liberal treatment of the workmen by means of old age pensions and accident and disability insurance; their expert administrative processes; their scientific statistics; their stress upon technical education and industrial development; and their magnificent application of engineering skill to the creation of harbors, but such comparatively minor lessons as the importance of tree planting and tree preservation, the control of public advertising when it becomes offensive to the esthetic sense; the employment of sculpture in public places on a wider scale; the supervision of the height and style of buildings, and many other similar instances of regulation and control.

I think it is fair to say that Boston, as well as the other American cities, is moving forward in the direction pointed out by these gentlemen at the Conference. Our subways and street system have received a major share of attention, because the whole life of the community flows through these avenues. Recently we have come to realize that we, after all, are primarily a seaport, and have taken thought for the

utilization of our magnificent waterfront and the establishment of proper rail connections with other parts of the country.

On the recreative side the most notable extension of activities in the last few years is the dotting of the entire residential portion of the city with new playgrounds, which, under the consolidated park and recreation department, which is soon to be created, will be administered under the guidance of the best experts that can be found.

Esthetically there is no local problem more fascinating than the rearrangement of Copley Square. I believe the members of the Conference have had an opportunity to see the drawings of the architect employed to suggest a better plan. The great Parkman bequest, which places at our disposal the income on five million dollars annually for park improvement, has been carefully expended, and the city will have as a result of the liberality of this worthy Bostonian an aquarium and a zoölogical garden, a marble memorial bandstand, and many other features of interest, while almost the entire soil of Boston Common has been made over to a depth of two feet, under the careful supervision of Mr. Olmsted.

Most of these improvements go to make life pleasanter for the people who must live in the cities themselves, but I think your movement might go further than this and aid and encourage city dwellers to move out of the congested sections into the outlying suburbs. At the last session in Philadelphia several of the papers dealt with the English movement for garden suburbs, and Mr. Raymond Unwin, the leader of that movement, was there in person to expound his ideas. Within a year a group of Boston gentlemen have purchased a large tract of land just south of Forest Hills in the least settled portion of Boston Proper, for the purpose of developing a garden suburb for Boston. The fact is that Boston is entirely surrounded with such suburbs. Its greatest beauty in some respects consists in the variety of the landscape and the wholesome living con-

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ditions that are to be found within a radius of ten or fifteen miles. Nowadays the trolley has penetrated the country in every direction and nowhere are these connecting lines more abundant than throughout New England. One may ride eighteen or nineteen miles through Greater Boston for a single fare. In New York, on the Interborough, one can ride twenty-four miles for five cents. To ride such distances in London, Paris, or Berlin would cost at least fifteen or sixteen cents. As any movement to reduce the tenement population and disperse them among the outlying districts depends absolutely upon cheap transportation, it would seem that the first condition for success has already been attained.

I do not need to emphasize the advantages of suburban life. It seems to me that people who are brought up in the outskirts of a great city under the open air and yet free from the narrowness of the hill towns and the back woods settlements, having reasonable access to the educational influences of the city itself, are peculiarly fortunate.

We all know that the tendency everywhere, in both Europe and America, is for the people to congregate in cities, and the very evils and problems that have grown up are due to this circumstance, which is not altogether a healthy sign. I could not help noticing, for example, on my recent return from Washington, how few cattle were to be seen pasturing in the meadows. In Europe one meets them everywhere, and they are not only an agreeable feature of the landscape with their rich markings and suggestion of life against the vegetation, but they are evidence, it seems to me, that the people are holding to their old simple tastes and that country life is not neglected. I might say that I have been so impressed with the importance of this and the advantage of bringing up my own children with a taste for nature that I have recently purchased a farm of my own and intend to cultivate it as a practical investment. I have also suggested to the park department of Boston that it set aside a space in one of

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the city parks for the growing of cereals such as corn, wheat, oats, rye, and buckwheat, as well as garden vegetables, and have conferred with the chairman of the school board on the question of having a class in agriculture.

One of the difficulties that settlement workers in New York have found is to get people who have never known any other life than that of the city to care for life in the open country. In a greater or less degree this holds true of thousands of tenement dwellers even in a city so well parked as Boston and provided with such facilities for getting out into the country. I would go so far as to suggest that this general idea be given a prominent place in your Conference a year from now. Of what avails it to cry out against crowded tenements, impure air, and congested streets when the whole tendency and spirit of the times leads to an exaggeration of these conditions. It is like flourishing Mrs. Partington's broom in the face of the Atlantic City surf. The more you develop steel construction and urge your sky-scrapers upward so that they literally touch the clouds, the more you congest your downtown streets and residential sections adjacent to the business district.

Moreover, there is this difficulty in dealing with large cities, that they are practically built up on unchangeable lines, while the open country in the suburbs presents opportunities for new beginnings which should avoid the mistakes of our predecessors. While I think there is danger of artificiality in the towns that spring completely out of the head of a landscape designer (a natural shrub always pleases me more than the trimmed bushes of the Japanese garden), I do not think this consideration outweighs the importance of distributing a population which is suffering in health, efficiency, and morals from the evils of overcrowding. I hope this may be taken up seriously, as it seems to me as important as any subject which has been considered.

In conclusion, I want to congratulate the members of the

conference upon the high standard which they have maintained. They are educators in the best sense of the word, and their lessons apply not to school children or college youths but to the entire community. We are all proud to have had them with us and our only regret is that they cannot come every year to stimulate and inspire us by their words and their example.

Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis, Minister of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn:

Gentlemen of the Conference, many, many years ago I made a proposition to my family physician that if he would keep me out of heaven I would do my best to keep him out of hell, but that I thought I had the hardest part of the job. So when my friend Mr. Bennett came down to Brooklyn to give us a plan for the city beautiful, for a beautiful Brooklyn, I told him immediately that if he would only pray and work with me for a plan for the divine city of God that I wished to have set up on earth, I would be almost glad to exchange jobs with him and try to find a plan for the city of Brooklyn.

Over the threshold of an old palace in the city of Florence I once read these words: "Erected to the glory of God and the adornment of my beloved city," and Browning tells us the story of the old merchant who erected the palace, tells us that his ambition was not merely to be self-supporting, but that he wanted to do something to adorn his beloved Florence; that he wished to have an excess over what was required for purposes of utility to devote to a cultivation of the beautiful; and he quoted the saying from Plato's Republic, that if any man would fain set his house in order on earth he will find that he is working towards an ideal of the divine city of God, the city beautiful of heaven.

And so in these strange ways we seem to have brought down to us in these modern times the notion that every man, every architect, every artist, every landscape gar-

dener, is really trying to find an ideal, divine, beautiful, celestial plan, that is to be set up here on earth; and I take it, gentlemen, that that is really the reason why everything is changing in modern society. When our grandfathers and grandmothers were here it was enough for them that the house kept out the rain and snow. Now the house must be beautiful, even if it is the workman's little cottage of few rooms. It must have its library and books, its pictures and decorations, its dining room, its room for social companionship. One hundred, or even fifty years ago, the Book of Truth was bound in plain sheepskin and printed in ugly black type; now the tencent magazine has its beautifully printed and illustrated text and ornamental cover. We have given up the ox cart and are riding in Pullman palace cars.

I take it, gentlemen, that the greatest change that has taken place between the old days and our time is this, that while the expression of the beautiful was then centered in castles, palaces, and cathedrals, it is now centered in the life of the common people. The development of the people was confined to the palaces, castles, and cathedrals for five hundred years; it now finds its expression in the clothes people wear, in the conveyances in which they ride, in the houses in which they live, and it is spreading out little by little into broader ideas for the general beautification of our great cities.

I take it that the greatness of your plan is this: that it means to give to things that have in themselves, apart from the working out of the plan, very little value, very great value indeed; that it represents the spirit that, taking a pile of bricks, makes them into a beautiful house, that, taking a bundle of words, turns them into a Hamlet, a King Lear, a David Copperfield, a Constitution of the people, a Declaration of Independence.

Little by little the world has advanced, until we see that we are entering upon an absolutely new epoch, that we are improving our houses, establishing beautiful play-

grounds and parks, having better factories, streets, shops, banks, - all these things forming the background, so to speak, of the huge, glorious canvas which is showing the whole life of the people absolutely transformed.

I suppose we will all agree in this, that the measure of an art lies in its flexibility. I believe it was Ruskin who said that landscape gardening was the lowest of the arts, because dirt was inflexible, and that, passing through the range of the arts, music stood at the top, because it dealt with the air, which was liquidity and flexibility itself. I suppose if I should accept the proposition that landscape gardening is at the bottom, because it is not flexible, that architecture is above it, because it is more flexible, that sculpture is higher because it is still more flexible, that literature stands higher among the fine arts because it handles words and ideas, and that music stands at the head because it deals with the most flexible thing known. the air, I would immediately come in conflict with our friend, Mr. Olmsted.

In touching on the relations of city planning to modern life I wish to say a word about the physical constitution of the American people, our health, our bodily building up and our mental and spiritual life. I take it that the most terrible document published in the last thirty years is the new Blue Book published by the English Parliament, which deals with the deterioration in physique of the English factory class. In that book England tells us she had twelve million of her people who live in closely congested towns, in the factory districts, where the bodily physique of the people has gone all to pieces; that they not only are no longer able to do good work, because they have not the physique, but that they are unable to do fine thinking. We all know that sound thinking stands with one foot on fine brain fiber and one on sound physique. Nineteen boys out of twenty in Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, are not able to obtain papers that would enable them to join the English army in case of war, because they have

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gone to pieces, because their arms and legs are atrophied, because their heart action is not right. Only a week ago last Saturday a cablegram came over from London through the Associated Press, saying that over 7500 Englishmen had applied for enlistment in the navy, and that the English government had refused 6500 of them. That is the coming English problem, — a more terrible problem than the problem of the southern part of Ireland. One quarter of England's people have gone to pieces physically. We have no reason to think that that is peculiar to England, because it is something that threatens everywhere where proper attention is not paid to the housing and the hygiene of the people. This report shows, in the first place, that these people are crowded together without proper playgrounds. without a chance to exercise in the fresh air, with poor and insufficient food. You can build a good physique on plain food, if there is enough of it, and if there is a chance for people to get fresh air, but you cannot build a good physique on the richest food if there is no chance for air or for exercise.

And when you come to this country, don't you believe that in our congested districts the American physique is going to pieces? I go out around the country occasionally to lecture and to find what people are thinking and talking about. I have recently been in thirty-four states in the South and in the great central West; and when you get outside of cities like Boston, Washington, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, you find that the most typical building in the United States is an insane asylum, a hospital for feeble-minded children, for epileptics, for the blind, deaf, lame, and halt, and you begin to realize that there is a breakdown going on in the American physique. When you go to England and ask to see the typical building, you are shown a castle or a university; in France a cathedral, in Italy a palace or cathedral. But the typical building in most of the cities in this country, the small cities, is a lunatic asylum, an institution for feeble-minded children or

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something of the sort, showing that bodies have gone to pieces.

When you come to examine the Indians, you discover that 86 Indians out of every one hundred have tuberculosis or one of the unnamable diseases; in San Antonio, 78 per cent of the Mexicans are diseased, 20,000 having either the unnamable diseases or tuberculosis. When you go to Central and South America, among twenty-five million people, you find almost the same conditions.

And you will find similar conditions in the congested districts of your own town. We as a people are breaking down. In New York, our working classes, those in the factory districts, are going to pieces right in front of our eyes. I know of nothing more terrible than the injury to the optic nerve of children, the injury to the ear and to the digestion; and when we hear the reports from physicians, those who examine the American physique, showing the deterioration of the eye, the nerve, the brain, the waning force of the heart as a great engine to force blood, we know that this country is on exactly the same road as other countries.

When you build a boy you have to build him in accordance with the fundamental laws of physical life. When an elm grows it pushes out branches which are soft, but they become hard. What makes them hard and tough? The wind blowing them back and forth. That exercises them, the sap runs up into them, they become strong, tough, and able to resist. It is so with a boy's body. When the boy stretches his arm by throwing a ball, or runs about, the blood flows to the arm or leg, supplying strength, nutrition, and you have a physical growth of the arm or leg. It is a crime to the children to keep them confined, as so many of them are, in the great cities today. They should be out where they can have elbow room, room to play, to exercise, to get fresh air.

Take my own city of Brooklyn; a very small percentage of the land is dedicated to parks. The little town of

Kissingen, in Germany, with 50,000 people, has a greater acreage of parks and playgrounds, more walks for men, women, and children, than the entire city of Brooklyn, with two million people. You cannot build boys and girls without fresh air, exercise, and good food.

Last summer, coming back in the month of August to the city of Brooklyn, I went over to the Heights. I saw a very pathetic sight at ten o'clock at night — a poor driver with a little baby in his arms and a young woman of twenty-five sobbing bitterly. They were sitting on the stone steps in front of the residence of one of the wealthy citizens of Brooklyn. I talked with the woman and found that she lived in the congested part of the city, not within two miles of a spot where the little child could have a breath of fresh air. She was fighting a losing battle for the life of the child, who was gasping for breath, and there were two other children, three and five years of age. She was so poor that she could not afford to pay the fares to take them to the park.

We lost last year in Brooklyn 10,000 children. The average locomotive costs \$10,000. Suppose every one lost was equal to a steam engine, and figure it out at four and one-half per cent. That is, we will say that last year there were destroyed, burned out, wasted in Brooklyn, ten thousand steam engines, each costing \$10,000. If the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad lost every year ten thousand locomotives, it would go into the hands of a receiver, for no railroad corporation in the United States, and not even the Standard Oil Company, could stand any such financial strain. How does American society hold on in face of this enormous loss?

We have had our poets, our novelists, our merchants, our inventors, but the next generation is going to apply to the architects, the landscape gardeners, the builders of cities, to work in the interests of the health and regeneration of the people. Your ideals will be realized in another generation, because the people are coming to understand that, as

they must have a different kind of house in this twentieth century, they must have a different kind of people. We are going to take great spaces in our cities and give them up to the boys and girls for parks and playgrounds, within walking distance of their homes — places where they can go and build up their bodies, their arms and legs, send good rich blood through their arteries. Unless we do this, our boys and girls are going to break down, and that means that we will break down in religion, in art, in science, in finance, and become a degenerate nation. Wherever we find people crowded together as we find them in some of our congested districts, we find that they lose the power to reproduce themselves in sound, healthy sons and daughters.

That is one side of city planning, with its relation to the national physique. Every nation depends on the sound health and physique of its people. There is always to be considered the important effect that broad, intelligent planning is going to have on real estate values, as well as on the comfort and happiness of the poor people. Of course, in this country we know nothing about taxation. A man who lives in London is taxed on his income and in other ways. He now pays one-fifteenth of his income back again; he pays a school tax, a street tax, a throne tax; he pays four and one-half times the tax pro rata that a man pays in the United States. But the man who pays a tax abroad understands that he is going to get something back. They have planning commissions in Germany and in Paris who go to work in an intelligent way with reference to real estate values. Over here we widen a little street - such as Livingston Street, Brooklyn. The city paid for only onethird of the lots, the front 30 feet on that street, as much as the lots were worth, and the owners then sold the remainder for as much as the 100 feet were worth before. If the city had condemned the entire 100 feet, used the 30 feet, and sold the remaining 70 feet, it would not only have made enough so that that particular street improvement would not have cost anything, but it would have made

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enough to build another street. I found a book on city planning in Munich last summer, and noticed this statement in the last chapter, that if the men in authority do not make their city planning pay the bills that are involved outside of the large park areas, it is because the plan is not properly made and worked out or not adequately carried through.

I was very much interested last summer in attending one of the public sessions of the men who have charge of the new movement over in Paris in connection with the plan to expend \$180,000,000 in the Latin Quarter, and my host on that occasion called my attention to the fact that they had been studying the great Chicago plan, and that the plan had created a sensation in Paris. He stated that they had gone into the plans they had in mind very carefully and had discovered this, that the people of Russia, of South America, of Asia, of New Orleans, of San Francisco, of New York, of Boston, Chicago, of all the cities and countries of the world, who were making money, went to Paris and spent their money. Taking the most careful statistics they found that Paris had an enormous income very largely from men who made money in almost all the rest of the planet, and then came to Paris to spend it. So they are going to spend \$180,000,000 there in improvements in the next ten years. That is an expenditure that would stagger Boston or New York, and yet they expect to get it back from the foreign visitors whom they will entertain, who are spending in Paris, according to the best figures they can obtain, \$750,000,000 a year; so that in the next ten years they will get from these visitors \$7,500,000,000. Therefore, although they are only going to spend \$180,000,000, they expect to clear in ten years about \$7,320,000,000. That is a pretty good investment.

The trouble in the United States is this: We are allowing the people of Texas to make the money, are allowing the people of the South and West to make the money, but

they do not come to Boston and New York to spend it. They go to Paris, because Paris is the most beautiful city in the world.

You put your investment into wood, and you get six per cent; you put it into iron and get a seven per cent return. But a Frenchman, with a conception of the beautiful, buys a piece of canvas for fifty cents and makes it into a beautiful painting, for which you pay \$107,000, the Frenchman making a profit of \$106,999.50. That is the way to make money! When a man comes along and buys a ton of raw pig iron for \$10, you do not ordinarily associate ideas of wealth with a ton of raw pig iron; but when the imagination and intellect have play and that ton of raw pig iron is converted into \$10,000 worth of hair springs for watches, you see where the intellect and imagination come in. The trouble in this country is this, that we have been dealing too much with raw material, overlooking the ideal, the imaginative, the beautiful, and have been getting a very small return for our money. If the city of Chicago carries out its plan, don't you believe that many millions will be spent there by people from the West and Southwest who now go to beautiful Paris and spend their money there?

We have got to the art age. It is not enough that things are useful, convenient, economical; they must be beautiful in addition to being useful and convenient. The next steps in American citizenship must be these: the streets that are beautiful, the houses that are beautiful, the life that is beautiful. The reason why we are making a fight against corruptionists in politics is, that they are an ugly blot on the body politic, and we want to make everything beautiful. The old conception of the beautiful has gone, and I take it that you gentlemen are more interested in its going than anybody else. The old idea of decoration and adornment, simply the frosting and veneer on the outside, has disappeared. Society had come to believe that beauty consisted in the frosting on the outside, the silky cheek. We now find out that beauty on the outside is but

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an exterior revelation of soundness and obedience to law on the inside. We have discovered that whenever a man obeys the law in the thing he is doing his work will blossom into the beautiful; that unless he obeys the laws of his art he has a canvas on the wall instead of a beautiful painting; and that if the American architect lives up to his ideals and obeys the laws of architecture in building a house, he shows us the finest type of home in the world. And so it is when a Wendell Phillips stirs us by his eloquence or when we live up to the beautiful memory of a revered father or mother. In other words, everything in modern life represents obedience to law, or if it represents disobedience to law, we say that it represents ugliness and decay.

And so I take it, even from the economic point of view, that we are going to give ourselves to the beautiful. It will increase our real estate values, but that is not the real end. We want to get at the facts, we want to get at the real truth of things, and in doing so we find our work blossoming into literature, into the beautiful in city building.

There is one other phase of our life that I would like to speak of for a minute, and that is this: This city and town planning movement is sweeping over the country, becoming almost a tidal wave. I was lecturing in Iowa the other day and found a little town of 3500 people who had passed under the influence of the Chicago plan. The business men and the citizens had come together, had raised money, dug three artesian wells, and were developing a lake of 320 acres. They had never dreamed of such a thing before. They have now started in, laid out a series of parks and playgrounds, have begun a little summer college, and have arranged for lectures and entertainments this summer, all in the interest of the farming people, and they are going to make their town a beautiful town. I understand that there are over 2000 towns and villages in the United States that have organized for work connected with the building of the town. It perhaps means as much for the life and the

civilization of this country as anything that has taken place.

I have seldom been so impressed by a document as by the new volume of statistics published in London, by Mulhall, on the farm lands of the world. That may seem far afield from city planning, and yet there is not a man here who will not be influenced ultimately by the conditions set forth in that book, showing the farm resources of the world. Taking the great mass of statistics he calls attention in the second chapter to the fact that the world will have to make up its mind to disappointment because of the discovery that, instead of a great increase in farm land and food products resulting from the opening up of Africa. such hope will have to be abandoned, because two-thirds of Africa and one-half of Southern Africa is desert and can never be utilized; that the greatest extent of Central Africa is at the equator, which crosses Africa at its broadest point; that statistics show that Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand contain but ten million square miles of farming land, while this little continent of America contains eleven million square miles of farming land, and will ultimately have one-half the population of the world.

The important thing is this, that we are going to own more than one-half the farm land of the globe, as citizens of the United States. We now own Alaska, and own more than half the resources of America. We have poured \$365,000,000 into one single American enterprise in the little state of Panama. For twenty years we have been buying coffee plantations in Brazil, mahogany lands in British Guiana and Venezuela, rubber plantations in Central America. We are going to control more than half the farm lands of the globe, and the United States will be rich beyond the dreams of any people of the world. The trickling stream of gold will swell into a river which will give to the people of the United States enough for their arts, for their architecture, for their city building and parks.

England, with twelve billions of dollars spent in one hun-

dred years, has bought India, South Africa, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and other possessions, and controls a population of 750,000,000, more than half the human race. We are 95,000,000 now. Last year we produced sixteen and one-half billions of dollars; this year the figure will probably be eighteen or twenty billions of dollars. If we should live as economically as our fathers did, in the next twelve months, we would save as much money as England spent for India, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Canada. Ultimately we will save it, and it will come back to us in the various ways making for civilization and advancement. We are destined to have an enormous population, to develop untold resources.

Our great Southwest is making money. No man who has not been in the Southwest recently can understand the wonderful revival and growth of trade there; no one can compute the amount of money that is coming into our American cities, like New York and Boston. I was down in Texas a while ago and saw men earning \$85 an acre net on their cotton lands, \$50 an acre net on their rice lands men who have made a fortune, in the last three years. I saw in a moment what the result would be. They are coming into the eastern cities to spend their money. They are going to be attracted by the architecture here, by the arts; they are going to pay out their money in millions. Men need joke about Texas no longer. No state in which you can travel in a straight line as far as the distance between Boston and Muscatine, Iowa, need be smiled at. If Texas had as many people to the square mile as Belgium you could put there all the people of the United States, plus all the people of Canada, plus all the people of Mexico, plus all the people of the Hawaiian Islands, and then in the single Texan houses have twenty million rooms to let for the people of Europe. The figures give a man a little bit of an idea of the future of industry in the United States.

In the long run what we spend in civilizing influences and in the development of the arts is going to come back to us

a hundredfold. We have money enough for food, clothes, and for the ordinary things. The next great stage in American citizenship is to be a renaissance of the beautiful in the fine arts. I found by the Consul General's report the other day that more than ten thousand Americans are registered as students in one line or another over in Paris, and the report shows that there are not as many students of the beautiful there from all the nationalities of Europe put together. These men and women are coming back to us, because the people of the United States are spending money on the fine arts.

When Balfour said the other day that the people of the United States are going to buy the art treasures of Europe, just as the English a while ago bought the art treasures of Spain and Italy, some of the English seemed to think it was a strange notion. But it will be so. The income of the average family in the United States, instead of being \$800 or \$900, is going to be \$2500; we are going to do away with the tenement house region, to have better housing, more and better parks. We are going to do away with the ugly spots. Starting with the city economical, we are going to have the city convenient, the city useful, which will blossom into the city beautiful. We ought to have, and we will have, in the men in charge of the movement in this country, an earnestness, a civic pride and enthusiasm, as great as that shown in the buildings of Athens, of Florence, of Venice.

I am riotously optimistic about the people of the United States. I do not believe any man can paint in colors too rich the future of this country and of the great cities of the country, especially along the lines of this new movement for city building and city planning.

Hon. Frederic C. Howe, Director People's Institute, New York City:

I have been listening to an exhaustive discussion of the subject of town planning from almost every point of view [210]

for three days, and it is because of that, rather than with any reflection upon the speakers who have occupied the platform during the last few days, that my mind turns to the story of a Wisconsin Swede who took his young lady "out to a buggy ride," as they say in the West. After a long silence he proposed to her, and she very promptly accepted him. The Swede was silent for some time, and finally the young lady said, "Ole, why don't you say nodings?" and Ole said, "Ay tank too much been said already."

I must plead guilty to the comments made by Mayor Fitzgerald upon my conversation with him. I did spend five delightful hours in an automobile traveling through Boston's parks, playgrounds, and along her waterfront, and when I landed at the hotel at half past seven in the evening I did feel a wonder in my mind, and I say, without reservation or any attempt to indulge in flattery or persiflage, that I think Boston has done the job - the building of parks, the intelligent conservation of human life through provisions for play, the wonderful bits of landscape gardening that we meet at every turn - better than any city in this country, yes, I think better than any city in the world. I think that is a rather interesting psychological fact, and I presume in this city, where Puritanism, Calvinism, Unitarianism, Christian Science, were given such hospitable welcome, that probably psychology is not a dead science. But it is an interesting psychological fact that Boston, which has dreamed, thought, and contributed to the world so much from the inner life, should more than any other city in this country, unless it be Washington, have thought of the city in physical terms, for Boston has contributed a great park of 17,000 acres which surpasses any in the world.

I remember coming here some years ago representing a magazine, when the business men among whom I circulated said, "Yes, Mayor Quincy has gone in for all sorts of socialistic ideas — for playgrounds, for public baths, for offering that sort of thing to the people." And it was

socialistic, then; but today all America has appropriated that conception of Boston of the physical foundation of city life. You were first, if I am not mistaken, to regulate the height of buildings. Unfortunately your courts made it rather costly, but you had that vision. You, too, developed a great metropolitan water works, a gigantic sewerage and water system. You have planned and have partially promoted and ripened the idea of a Metropolitan Planning Commission, of a system of docks for the conservation of your waterfront. You have controlled the subway situation - not as I would control it, because I believe in the municipal ownership of public things, but better, I think, than any other city in this country. You, I think, have developed the best library system; you have developed schools that are among the best in this country. This, I think, is psychologically strange, because it sprang up among a people who are famed in America for the emphasis they have laid upon religious, ethical, and psychological things.

That is the impression that Boston makes upon me that you have had the realization that the city is a physical thing, that it is something like a World's Fair, like a railroad system, like a private house; that it has to be built for all the people who use it, who live in it.

I have long felt about the American people - that, instead of being, as Herbert Spencer says, the most tolerant of people, we are really the most intolerant of people; that there are more people to every hundred in Boston, in New York, in Chicago, in Cleveland, interested in civic matters, fighting for better things, than there are in Germany, in England, in any other country with which I am familiar.

Personally I think the American people are not only more intolerant of bad things, but that they have a quicker sense of morality and immorality than the Germans and the English. My explanation of the failure of American cities is not personal at all. It is not ethical at all. I think the American people are all right. The trouble with

our cities is economic, it is physical, it is social. We have turned the city on its apex; we have done what Gulliver found among his islands. We, almost alone, or more than any people in the world, have assumed that the city was a political thing, like a county, like a township; that it was ethical, and that, along with some other contributions which you have made in Boston to America is, I think, a very false note. You have contributed to us that overemphasis on the personally ethical, so that we, all over America, have neglected the economic. We have failed to build because out of Puritanism there sprang that emphasis on the individual. It was that which led us so easily and quickly to appropriate from England the Manchester philosophy of "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost," of competition, of that interpretation of the Darwinian philosophy, which minimized to the utmost the community and exalted to the heights the rights of personal property. The wonderful thing about this town planning Conference of the last three days, which psychologically marks, I think, a high-water mark in all the municipal conferences I have ever attended, is that for three days, from business men, professional men, architects, and engineers, there has been a protest against the ascendancy of property.

I have been interested in things municipal for probably twenty years, and as I go back over the conferences I have attended, the organizations with which I have been identified, it seems to me that the municipal movement has gone through a steady evolution. The first stage of our revolt was, "Turn the rascals out." You remember that stage. It was a partisan stage. The next stage was that of good government, — merely good government. Then we moved on to the idea of a business man's administration. "Let us get the business men in office, and all things will be well." We fussed about charters, about the spoils system, about the immigrants, about the ignorant voter. We tried a great variety of things, and if you will go back and

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enumerate in your minds all the things we have tried in the last twenty years you will agree with me, I think, that they have been personal, they have been ethical, they have been political, but that not until the town planning movement was born did we realize that the city was a physical thing. And we are just beginning to appreciate, as does Germany, as does France, and to an extent as does England, that the city is physical and that our far most costly mistakes have not been personal at all. They have been physical. The ignoring of the physical foundations of the city explains the poverty that Dr. Hillis spoke about. For we lure our people into our cities. They create high land values. The means of transportation are inadequate to the needs of the city; and poverty is produced by high rents, by awful housing conditions, which in turn are traceable to high land values. Civilized nations have put the plumbing of our cities in private hands; we have turned over the street railways, the gas, the electric lighting, the telephone, and the water service, to private hands. Think of the owner of an office building who should turn over his elevators, his plumbing, to private hands, to exact the highest possible return from that service, and to render the worst possible service. But that is what we have done. We have failed to control the land speculator, who lays out our streets; we have failed to control the builder, who shoots us up in the air perpendicularly instead of permitting us to live upon the ground. We permit private interests to appropriate our waterfronts, to strangle trade and commerce, and increase the cost of living. We have left the planning of cities to private individuals with no appreciation of community rights, of the rights of all of us, with a resultant ugliness, to speak of only one part of it, which is an offence that the community ought to protect itself against.

And that, it seems to me, is the interpretation of the American city. Our worst costs, your worse costs in Boston here, are not the spoils system. I have been told

that the lowest estimate of cost here, due to the opening up of streets, to correct mistakes, is thirty or forty million dollars. It is costing Chicago running into the hundreds of millions of dollars to correct its streets, because of mistakes of the past, to make provision for its traffic and commerce.

Town planning is a protest against the indifference to the economic foundations of life. Last week in New York I listened to Woodrow Wilson at the Economic Club. He. borrowing from a Scotchman who had visited him and who had made a great impression upon him, said it was an interesting fact, taking the centuries of history, that we found one great note dominating each age: That in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries all thought was saturated with the Newtonian hypothesis, that politics reflected it, that the thought of all people was saturated with it; that when we came to adopt our Federal Constitution we adopted the Newtonian theory carried over into politics and provided the checks, balances, and distributions of powers. In the next century, the nineteenth, Darwin came forward with his evolutionary theory, and that the evolutionary theory gradually drew to it as a sponge all other thoughts, until we began to interpret life in evolutionary terms, - not as a static thing, not as a crystallized thing, as in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under the Newtonian hypothesis, but as a growing thing; that under that Darwinian hypothesis we naturally adopted the philosophy of the Manchester school of physical science, which said that the progress of the world came through individualism, through the sacrifices of the community to the rights of each individual, that property was sacred, more sacred than anything else - and that life was advanced by the freest possible play of the struggle for existence. And now we are passing over into a new philosophy, a philosophy of the twentieth century, which will draw to it as a sponge, - just as did the evolutionary hypothesis, just as did the Newtonian hypothesis, - a new set of ideas, which

up to the present time have been expressed by Marx, by our great Socialist, Lester F. Ward, by Prince Krapot-kin, whose expression of it is that civilization advances in a direct ratio as society protects itself from certain predatory influences; that it is necessary for the city to do certain things, like provision for water, parks, and playgrounds, in order that society may be free to evolve, to have its growth; that that is the philosophy of the twentieth century, just as the struggle for existence was the philosophy of the nineteenth century.

And this town planning movement, it seems to me, could not have sprung up in any other age. Of necessity it was a reflection of this idea of Krapotkin, who, taking animal life, demonstrates that those species survive best, progress most, where the group spirit prevails, where they work in packs, where individualism is subordinated to the rights

of the community.

I think that is true. I think that is true in municipal study, that no matter where you go, in what age of the world you study it, you will find that civilization has sprung from the city and that the advance of civilization has been in direct ratio as the city did many things for the protection of the weaker members of the community from the strong. That is the meaning of the philosophy of Athens, in which the rights of the individual were very slight, in which the life of the community was in the open, - in the temples, in the streets, in the porticoes, - in which all life was centered on leisure. The expenditures were for the purpose of giving the Athenian leisure to develop the arts and sciences, the drama. He lived in his leisure, and his leisure was the result of town planning. In Rome the same was true. Culture came when the city planned physically for leisure. In Florence, in Genoa, in Venice, the rich merchants built cities as well as private homes; they subordinated private rights to public rights; they had a high community ideal. They thought not on their own doorsteps, but as a community. And today in

Germany the great cities of this age are being produced by a state that thinks in community terms, that compels the railroads to serve, the water ways to serve, the land speculator to serve; that compels the builder to limit the height of his house, that puts its heavy hand on slums and tenements, that views the city as a whole and that subordinates property to life.

And so it seems that all of these agencies, activities, philosophies, are focusing into a philosophy of city building, not in a small way but in a big way. We should build cities not for a single sense, the sense of touch, the means of transit, but realizing that God gave us five senses, not one, and that a community is negligent, terribly wasteful, that builds its cities merely for the satisfaction of one sense rather than of five senses.

We are also beginning to appreciate that leisure determines the whole civilization of a people. We are beginning to appreciate that, almost alone among the nations of the earth today, America divides life into two sessions,—eight hours of work and eight hours of sleep. The eight hours of leisure, when civilization comes, when the arts develop, when life springs up in a community, are turned over to commerce, to the saloon, to the dance hall, to the commercialized amusements. And no civilization can grow or flower when all of its opportunities for culture are in the hands of commerce.

That is why this city planning movement holds such a big appeal to me, — because it attacks, just as the Greeks attacked, as the Romans attacked, as the Germans today are attacking, the problems of civilization, of leisure time in which to make provision not only for the recreation and happiness of a people but for their education. It is opening up streets into which it will be a joy to go; it is building playgrounds, opening schoolhouses, building parks. It is a vision of life — not of twenty million warring units, with "the devil take the hindmost" as the highest motive, but a life in which the activities of man will be given an

opportunity for their biggest, freest, most democratic play, under proper physical surroundings.

HON. JOHN E. REYBURN, Ex-Mayor of Philadelphia:

I have been in a sort of trance here this evening listening to the two speakers who have preceded me, because what has been said has made me think perhaps more deeply than I ever did before, and I thought I had given some time and some thought to this city planning question during the last four or five years. I have often dreamed or thought I could see for the future of the cities and for the future of this movement something that was greater, something that was better in its conception for man, than anything that had been evolved, certainly within my experience.

The more I observe the more I am impressed by the conditions that surround not only this country but all the countries of the world. A sort of upheaval is coming, and the people not only of our country but of the world, the future men and women, must be taught and made to believe that their fathers fought for that change. We as a community must satisfy this great longing that is coming into people's minds, and the lines along which we are working represent the only way to satisfy it. They must be taught not only their advantages in a money sense, but in all that goes to make men better, to lead them to have nobler and better thoughts. This is the secret of the success of city planning, that down deep in the public mind there is this great thought for the welfare of all the people; and the thing we must do is to bring that thought out, to develop it, and we will have the support and the backing of all the public.

It has been so in our community. The fact that more progress has not been made in the past is only because the people have not been aroused, because they have been led to think that dollars meant everything, that taxes must not be raised, that money must not be spent for

anything except the most practical and most utilitarian purposes. Now I can see that they look at it in a different way, and that any public movement in the city of Philadelphia to buy land for parks, to give cleaner and better streets, to improve the water supply, and to make all civic conditions better, will have the support of the public unanimously. No man or men will dare to raise their hand for one instant against any great movement of this kind, free from partisanship, free from locality, embracing both the city and the region roundabout.

The city of Boston ought to join with the communities surrounding it in preserving certain natural things that it is yet possible to preserve in a great deal of their original and natural beauty. So it is around the city of New York; so it is around the city of Philadelphia. Take our Schuylkill River, for instance. It passes through a most beautiful region, lined with cities and communities. Soon it will be destroyed, if something is not done. All the trees, all the grass, all that goes to show our children and those who are to come after us, what the world was when we were young, will pass away. Nothing made or created by man can take its place. And what better or greater movement could be inaugurated than to take in that river along its entire banks and preserve those natural beauties? It is not useful today, it is not necessary for commerce. The banks of the river are mountain ridges, which, bought and taken care of by the different communities, would be a heritage such as nothing in the world, no money value, could ever replace in time to come, if once destroyed. So it is, gentlemen, with all our cities; and so it is well that this planning convention should come together and discuss these subjects, joining together as one body of men, thinking alone of the great public good.

It has been so with us in Philadelphia. Men of all classes — engineers, architects, ministers, business men, men interested in all the various walks of life — have come

together and said, "We can join in this great movement for the planning of a great city and for the improvement of our community." And so in every community we can make this movement one of the greatest benefits to mankind that has arisen within our lifetime, or, I might say, within the history of man; because there can be no nobler conception, no nobler work, than to take men and put them in better fields, to make them see a better world around them, and to believe that there is something in the world besides grubbing for money all the time and never seeing anything but the dollars. Why, sometimes I am almost disgusted when I hear the talk there is about the cost of city planning. The cost of preserving some beautiful, natural thing does not amount to anything, and no man can say that it is not money well spent to preserve it and to hand it down to those who come after us.

# PROCEEDINGS AT THE BUSINESS SESSION

THE Business Session was held in the Aldermanic Chamber of Boston City Hall at four o'clock in the afternoon of May 29, 1912, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Frederick Law Olmsted, presiding.

# RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CONFERENCE

Approval of the principle of assessment for benefit as laid down in Mr. Nelson P. Lewis's paper:

Whereas, It is the sense of the Conference that, however admirable may be the plans prepared for the improvement of cities, progress must depend in large degree upon the equitable distribution of the expense involved in the execution of the plans and in the soundness of the methods employed in financing them.

Resolved, That the Conference hereby approves of the five general principles laid down in the paper presented to the Conference upon this subject by Nelson P. Lewis and com-

mends them to the cities here represented, namely -

1. "Where there is local benefit, there should always be local assessment on the land benefited."

2. "The entire city, or the metropolitan district, should bear no part of the expense unless the improvement is in some

degree of metropolitan importance and benefit."

3. "Assessments should not be confined to the cost of acquiring and improving streets, but should extend to any improvement which will increase the value of the neighboring property, and should be apportioned as nearly as possible according to the probable benefit."

4. "A workable policy once adopted should be consistently

adhered to."

5. "The determination of a policy and its application to each case should be entrusted to a board composed of men

especially qualified, whose terms of office should so overlap as to insure continuity of policy and purpose."

Adoption of the report of the Committee on a Proposed Study in City Planning:

Resolved, That the report of the Committee on a Proposed Study in City Planning be adopted by the Conference and a committee of five be appointed by the Executive Committee to carry it into effect.

# REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PROPOSED STUDY IN CITY PLANNING

The committee appointed by the Executive Committee of the Conference to prepare for the consideration of the Conference a program for a coöperative or competitive study in the planning of a tract in the outskirts of a growing city based upon the general outline printed in the Preliminary Circular of the Conference, begs to submit the following report:

After careful consideration of the advantages and limitations of a hypothetical case and of a real tract of land or a number of selected tracts, the committee is of the opinion that a hypothetical case based upon an assumed topography will prove, on the whole, more interesting and profitable, and permit of a more ready and accurate comparison of the results and ideas contained in the various plans. The committee believes that a well-organized hypothetical city plan, dealing even in a skeletonized manner with all of the more important elements that should be included in a city plan, would do more than any other one thing now open to the Conference toward clearing the minds of their own members and of the general public as to what city planning comprises. It would also tend to set a standard for those actually engaged with the concrete problems in this field.

Therefore, the committee presents as a basis for the pro-

posed study and investigation a topographic map (subject to change), covering about 500 acres. With regard to the property, the following conditions are to be assumed:

1. The tract is located on the outskirts of a growing city, but entirely within its corporate limits. This city at present has a population of 500,000 inhabitants.

2. The tract is so situated that it will be reasonable to apply to it the following assumptions upon which the recommendations and predictions of the several plans are to be based:

- a. The rate and direction of growth of the city is assumed to be such that the tract when fully developed with streets, etc., will be absorbed by the demand for building lots within a reasonably short period and at prices sufficient to repay the investment in the land of \$3,000 an acre, together with the cost of development, interest, taxes (15 mills of assessed valuation at full value), selling cost and a fair profit, and that within ten years it will be built up almost to the full extent contemplated by the plan. It is assumed that the streets would be dedicated without cost to the city, and that such street improvements as are usually charged against the property, with the exception of grading and sewers, should be charged against the abutting property at the actual cost of the work in front of each property (for half the width of the street); the cost of work in the roadway at intersections to be distributed pro rata throughout the adjacent blocks; the cost of grading to be distributed pro rata throughout all the street frontage, and the cost of sewers, both main and branch, in each drainage area to be distributed pro rata throughout all the frontage within that area.
- b. The demand is assumed to be mainly for the erection of dwellings and for such other purposes as are normally incidental to such a development—retail stores, local places of amusement, schools, churches, etc. Approximately half of the population is assumed to be engaged in or dependent upon work in nearby factories. The majority

of families, it is assumed, will occupy dwellings commercially rentable at from \$15 to \$30 per month, while there must also be provision for some families who cannot afford to pay \$15 a month and for a considerable minority who will demand residences rentable at from \$30 to \$100 a month, or occasionally even higher.

c. In order to avoid confusing discrepancies in the legal conditions which the various plans are devised to meet, it is proposed to assume, unless otherwise stated, that developments on private property in each tract are to be governed by the requirements defined in the Building Code approved by the National Board of Fire Underwriters and in the New York State Tenement House Act.

It is proposed to confine the plans to a general plan drawn at a scale of 200 feet to the inch, and street cross-sections at 16 feet to the inch. Plans are not to bear the name or mark of the designer. The general plan is to be presented as a blue-print or a black-line print. If it takes the form of a black-line print, it may be rendered in flat wash in color. The general plan should include:

- a. The layout of streets and proposed public properties.
- b. Such desirable control over the developments on the private lands as could properly be exercised by ordinance or statute under the most favorable existing constitutional limits in the United States. Differentiated building regulations are assumed to be constitutional.
- c. Such control as might reasonably be expected to be exercised by enlightened and public-spirited land companies through restrictions in the deeds of lots with a view to increasing the saleable value of the tract as a whole.

It is proposed that the plans and accompanying reports, herewith suggested, be presented at the next meeting of the National Conference on City Planning and that the present Conference appoint a committee to make the further arrangements necessary and to appraise and report upon the merits of the various plans submitted. The committee does not recommend an award of prizes, nor does it wish

to emphasize the study as a competition in the ordinary sense. It is of the opinion that the interest in city planning is just now of such a character that better results will follow from studies which are undertaken more in the spirit of coöperation than of competition. In other words, it wishes mainly to focus attention more definitely upon the scope and nature of some of the more important problems of modern American city planning and through the studies proposed to afford a convenient and useful clearing-house for the best ideas and methods.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed)

JOHN NOLEN, B. A. HALDEMAN, GEORGE B. FORD.

An exhibit of municipal activities at the Panama-Pacific Exposition:

Resolved, That the City Planning Conference, recognizing the increasing importance of the problems confronting our municipalities, does hereby urge upon the Panama-Pacific Exposition Company the desirability of featuring an exhibit illustrating, in a convincing and comprehensive manner, all the

manifold municipal activities.

Resolved further, That a committee of five members, including the Chairman of the Boston Conference and the incoming Chairman be appointed by the Chairman to take steps to secure if possible the coöperation of the Federal, State and Municipal governments and of national and local civic and sociological organizations to assure the realization and success of the proposal.

In explanation of this resolution, Dr. Frank A. Wolff, of the Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C., communicated

the following remarks:

Some few months ago, in connection with the preparation of a report on another subject, it occurred to me that the time was ripe for a great coöperative effort for municipal betterment. An unusual opportunity for the development of such coöperation seemed to be offered through the

medium of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition to be held in San Francisco in 1915.

The exhibit I had in mind was one which would illustrate, by models, apparatus and appliances, maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, tabulations, reports, and by such outdoor exhibits as might be deemed necessary, all the activities of a modern municipality.

Appreciating the assistance that the Federal Government has given to the maintenance of Agricultural Experiment Stations, I undertook to develop the attitude of government officials toward the idea of a municipal exhibit, and I am happy to state that the suggestion for Federal cooperation in the solution of municipal problems has met with a most hearty response.

This further encouraged me to take up the matter with the Panama-Pacific Exposition Company. I am also happy to state that the Exposition is greatly interested in the proposal, and I am led to believe that the only thing which stands in the way of its realization is the question of working out a feasible method for carrying it out. The final decision will rest mainly in the hands of Dr. F. J. V. Skiff, Director General of Foreign and Domestic Participation, who is now abroad.

My particular object in bringing this matter to the attention of the Committee on Resolutions was to secure the active assistance of this body and its individual members in convincing the Exposition Company of the timeliness and importance of featuring a comprehensive municipal exhibit.

With regard to the coöperation to be expected from the Federal Government, this would consist only in small part in providing funds for especially prepared exhibits along many lines, but, more important by far, Congress should be urged to provide funds for the publication of reports on the principal topics illustrated.

These reports should be of two kinds: One aimed to present in the form of technical treatises, summarizing

all the information of value collected from every source, which taken together would constitute what might be termed a municipal encyclopedia, and the second set, intended for general distribution, prepared along non-technical lines, but aimed to present in a logical and convincing manner the lessons of the exhibit. To my mind such reports would be almost invaluable and would alone be worth more than the entire cost of the Exposition.

In conclusion, I might say that since the object of the proposal is to lay the foundation of the application in so far as it may be justifiable of the principles of standardization, to municipal activities and thus make it possible for municipalities to perform their functions better and in most cases more economically, the savings effected could be devoted to the broader undertakings for which our organization stands.

# Printing of papers for distribution:

Whereas, Frequent requests have been made in open meeting that copies of some of the individual papers be printed in quantity for prompt and inexpensive distribution;

Be it resolved, That the Conference commends such action

to the consideration of the Executive Committee.

# Resolution of thanks:

Resolved, That the thanks of this, the Fourth National Conference on City Planning be and are hereby tendered to —

First: The City of Boston and to his Honor Mayor Fitzgerald, for the hearty welcome extended to this Conference and the complimentary luncheon which opened it; to the Boston Chamber of Commerce; the Boston City Club; the Boston Public Library and especially to Mr. O. H. Fleischner; Harvard University; the Woman's Municipal League; the Boston Dwelling House Company; the Local Committee and all coöperating organizations, for their hospitality.

Second: To the Press for its interesting, sympathetic and

adequate reports of this Conference, and

Third: To the officers of the retiring Executive Committee

and particularly to the esteemed and efficient secretary, Mr. Flavel Shurtleff.

Fourth: To the contributors of the formal papers to whose expenditure of time and thought the success of the Conference is so largely due, and

Fifth: To the Russell Sage Foundation for the support of

its continued and substantial sympathy.

# Coöperation of other organizations:

Whereas, It is desirable to increase general interest in City Planning and broaden the knowledge of the public regard-

ing competent methods of undertaking this work.

Resolved, That the Executive Committee of the National Conference on City Planning should consider the advisability of inviting all organizations of a social or civic nature, including women's clubs, men's church clubs and brotherhoods, and also neighborhood improvement societies, to coöperate with the National Conference on City Planning by introducing this subject in their educational and lecture courses.

# THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FIFTH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITY PLANNING

#### CONSTITUTION

The report of the Committee on Nominations and Constitution, made up of Messrs. Charles Moore, of Detroit; J. Randolph Coolidge, Jr., of Boston; John Ihlder and George B. Ford, of New York City, that the forms of proposed constitutions be referred to the Executive Committee of the Fifth Conference, with instructions to consult the general committee and report to the Fifth Conference its recommendations, was unanimously adopted by the Conference.

# Nominations

The nominations of the Committee for General and Executive Committee with the addition of several nominations from the floor, were unanimously adopted.

Voted, on motion of Mr. Veiller, that the Executive Committee be empowered to add to the membership of the General Committee.

Voted, on motion of Mr. Ihlder, that for meetings of the Executive Committee, five members should constitute a quorum.

Voted, on motion of Mr. Crawford, that the Executive Committee should have the power to add one member to its number from the city where the Conference of 1913 is held.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

# Fifth National Conference on City Planning

FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED, Brookline, Mass. Nelson P. Lewis, 277 Broadway, N. Y. City. GEORGE E. HOOKER, City Club, Chicago. LAWRENCE VEILLER, 105 East 22d St., N. Y. Citv. ANDREW WRIGHT CRAWFORD, Stephen Girard Bldg., Philadelphia. HON. FREDERIC C. Howe, People's Institute, N. Y. City. E. P. Goodrich, 17 Park Row, N. Y. City. E. H. BENNETT, Railway Exchange, Chicago. GEORGE A. Ross, Montreal, Can. JOHN C. DANA, Free Public Library, Newark, N. J. HENRY C. WRIGHT, 105 East 22d St., N. Y. City. Hon. Lawson Purdy, Hall of Records, N. Y. City. RICHARD B. WATROUS, Union Trust Bldg., Washington. GEORGE B. FORD, 347 Fifth Av., N. Y. City. J. P. Hynes, 199 Yonge St., Toronto, Can. GEORGE S. WEBSTER, City Hall, Philadelphia.

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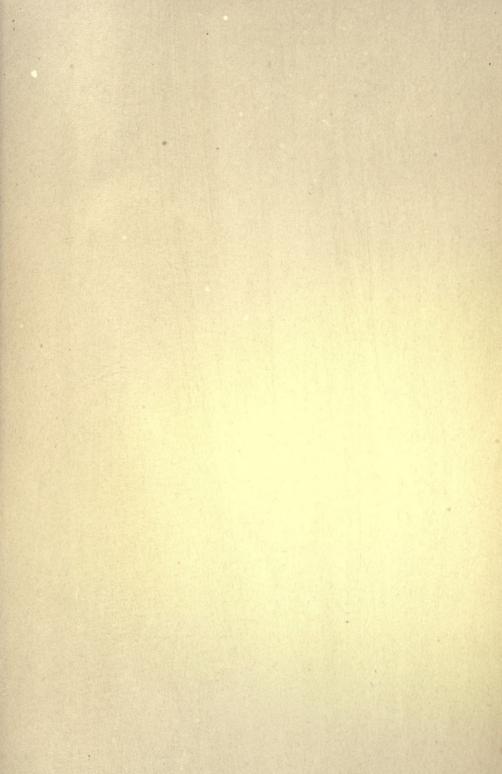
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